Introductory essay by
Arthur M. Schlesinger, jr.

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN

MAJOR WORLD LEADERS



Tom Lashnits

MAJOR WORLD LEADERS

KING ABDULLAH II

YASIR ARAFAT

BASHAR AL-ASSAD

MENACHEM BEGIN

SILVIO BERLUSCONI

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RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN

VICENTE FOX

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KIM IL SUNG AND KIM JONG IL

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PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

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ANWAR SADAT

THE SAUDI ROYAL FAMILY

GERHARD SCHROEDER

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LUIZ INÁCIO LULA DA SILVA

MUAMMAR QADDAFI



MAJOR WORLD LEADERS

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan



Tom Lashnits

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Cover: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in March 2003, outside the prime minister's office several days after he was elected to that position. At the time his party took office, Turkey was under intense pressure from the United States to allow U.S. ground troops to land on Turkish soil or at least to allow the United States to use Turkish airspace during its impending war with Iraq.

Frontispiece: Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addresses the assembly at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, January 2004. During his address, Erdoğan suggested that a mediator from a neutral country could help, once the stalled talks over the reunification of Cyprus resume.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword: On Leadership
Arthur M. Schlesinger, jr. 6

1 A Land Between Two Peoples 12

2 Ancient Inheritance 26

3 The Making of Modern Turkey 40

4 Into the Fray 54

5 The Islamists Come of Age 68

6 Path to Power 82

7 The New Prime Minister 96

8 Facing the Future 112

Chronology 125

Further Reading 127

Index 128

On Leadership

Arthur M. Schlesinger, jr.

Leadership, it may be said, is really what makes the world go round. Love no doubt smoothes the passage; but love is a private transaction between consenting adults. Leadership is a public transaction with history. The idea of leadership affirms the capacity of individuals to move, inspire, and mobilize masses of people so that they act together in pursuit of an end. Sometimes leadership serves good purposes, sometimes bad; but whether the end is benign or evil, great leaders are those men and women who leave their personal stamp on history.

Now, the very concept of leadership implies the proposition that individuals can make a difference. This proposition has never been universally accepted. From classical times to the present day, eminent thinkers have regarded individuals as no more than the agents and pawns of larger forces, whether the gods and goddesses of the ancient world or, in the modern era, race, class, nation, the dialectic, the will of the people, the spirit of the times, history itself. Against such forces, the individual dwindles into insignificance.

So contends the thesis of historical determinism. Tolstoy's great novel *War and Peace* offers a famous statement of the case. Why, Tolstoy asked, did millions of men in the Napoleonic Wars, denying their human feelings and their common sense, move back and forth across Europe slaughtering their fellows? "The war," Tolstoy answered, "was bound to happen simply because it was bound to happen." All prior history determined it. As for leaders, they, Tolstoy said, "are but the labels that serve to give a name to an end and, like labels, they have the least possible connection with the event." The greater the leader, "the more conspicuous the inevitability and the predestination of every act he commits." The leader, said Tolstoy, is "the slave of history."

Determinism takes many forms. Marxism is the determinism of class. Nazism the determinism of race. But the idea of men and women as the slaves of history runs athwart the deepest human instincts. Rigid determinism abolishes the idea of human freedom—the assumption of free choice that underlies every move we make, every word we speak, every thought we think. It abolishes the idea of human responsibility,

since it is manifestly unfair to reward or punish people for actions that are by definition beyond their control. No one can live consistently by any deterministic creed. The Marxist states prove this themselves by their extreme susceptibility to the cult of leadership.

More than that, history refutes the idea that individuals make no difference. In December 1931 a British politician crossing Fifth Avenue in New York City between 76th and 77th Streets around 10:30 P.M. looked in the wrong direction and was knocked down by an automobile—a moment, he later recalled, of a man aghast, a world aglare: "I do not understand why I was not broken like an eggshell or squashed like a gooseberry." Fourteen months later an American politician, sitting in an open car in Miami, Florida, was fired on by an assassin; the man beside him was hit. Those who believe that individuals make no difference to history might well ponder whether the next two decades would have been the same had Mario Constasino's car killed Winston Churchill in 1931 and Giuseppe Zangara's bullet killed Franklin Roosevelt in 1933. Suppose, in addition, that Lenin had died of typhus in Siberia in 1895 and that Hitler had been killed on the Western Front in 1916. What would the 20th century have looked like now?

For better or for worse, individuals do make a difference. "The notion that a people can run itself and its affairs anonymously," wrote the philosopher William James, "is now well known to be the silliest of absurdities. Mankind does nothing save through initiatives on the part of inventors, great or small, and imitation by the rest of us—these are the sole factors in human progress. Individuals of genius show the way, and set the patterns, which common people then adopt and follow."

Leadership, James suggests, means leadership in thought as well as in action. In the long run, leaders in thought may well make the greater difference to the world. "The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong," wrote John Maynard Keynes, "are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. . . . The power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas."

But, as Woodrow Wilson once said, "Those only are leaders of men, in the general eye, who lead in action. . . . It is at their hands that new thought gets its translation into the crude language of deeds." Leaders in thought often invent in solitude and obscurity, leaving to later generations the tasks of imitation. Leaders in action—the leaders portrayed in this series—have to be effective in their own time.

And they cannot be effective by themselves. They must act in response to the rhythms of their age. Their genius must be adapted, in a phrase from William James, "to the receptivities of the moment." Leaders are useless without followers. "There goes the mob," said the French politician, hearing a clamor in the streets. "I am their leader. I must follow them." Great leaders turn the inchoate emotions of the mob to purposes of their own. They seize on the opportunities of their time, the hopes, fears, frustrations, crises, potentialities. They succeed when events have prepared the way for them, when the community is awaiting to be aroused, when they can provide the clarifying and organizing ideas. Leadership completes the circuit between the individual and the mass and thereby alters history.

It may alter history for better or for worse. Leaders have been responsible for the most extravagant follies and most monstrous crimes that have beset suffering humanity. They have also been vital in such gains as humanity has made in individual freedom, religious and racial tolerance, social justice, and respect for human rights.

There is no sure way to tell in advance who is going to lead for good and who for evil. But a glance at the gallery of men and women in MAJOR WORLD LEADERS suggests some useful tests.

One test is this: Do leaders lead by force or by persuasion? By command or by consent? Through most of history leadership was exercised by the divine right of authority. The duty of followers was to defer and to obey. "Theirs not to reason why/Theirs but to do and die." On occasion, as with the so-called enlightened despots of the 18th century in Europe, absolutist leadership was animated by humane purposes. More often, absolutism nourished the passion for domination, land, gold, and conquest and resulted in tyranny.

The great revolution of modern times has been the revolution of equality. "Perhaps no form of government," wrote the British historian James Bryce in his study of the United States, *The American Commonwealth*, "needs great leaders so much as democracy." The idea that all people

should be equal in their legal condition has undermined the old structure of authority, hierarchy, and deference. The revolution of equality has had two contrary effects on the nature of leadership. For equality, as Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out in his great study *Democracy in America*, might mean equality in servitude as well as equality in freedom.

"I know of only two methods of establishing equality in the political world," Tocqueville wrote. "Rights must be given to every citizen, or none at all to anyone . . . save one, who is the master of all." There was no middle ground "between the sovereignty of all and the absolute power of one man." In his astonishing prediction of 20th-century totalitarian dictatorship, Tocqueville explained how the revolution of equality could lead to the *Führerprinzip* and more terrible absolutism than the world had ever known.

But when rights are given to every citizen and the sovereignty of all is established, the problem of leadership takes a new form, becomes more exacting than ever before. It is easy to issue commands and enforce them by the rope and the stake, the concentration camp and the *gulag*. It is much harder to use argument and achievement to overcome opposition and win consent. The Founding Fathers of the United States understood the difficulty. They believed that history had given them the opportunity to decide, as Alexander Hamilton wrote in the first Federalist Paper, whether men are indeed capable of basing government on "reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend . . . on accident and force."

Government by reflection and choice called for a new style of leadership and a new quality of followership. It required leaders to be responsive to popular concerns, and it required followers to be active and informed participants in the process. Democracy does not eliminate emotion from politics; sometimes it fosters demagoguery; but it is confident that, as the greatest of democratic leaders put it, you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. It measures leadership by results and retires those who overreach or falter or fail.

It is true that in the long run despots are measured by results too. But they can postpone the day of judgment, sometimes indefinitely, and in the meantime they can do infinite harm. It is also true that democracy is no guarantee of virtue and intelligence in government, for the voice of the people is not necessarily the voice of God. But democracy, by assuring the right of opposition, offers built-in resistance to the evils

inherent in absolutism. As the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr summed it up, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to justice makes democracy necessary."

A second test for leadership is the end for which power is sought. When leaders have as their goal the supremacy of a master race or the promotion of totalitarian revolution or the acquisition and exploitation of colonies or the protection of greed and privilege or the preservation of personal power, it is likely that their leadership will do little to advance the cause of humanity. When their goal is the abolition of slavery, the liberation of women, the enlargement of opportunity for the poor and powerless, the extension of equal rights to racial minorities, the defense of the freedoms of expression and opposition, it is likely that their leadership will increase the sum of human liberty and welfare.

Leaders have done great harm to the world. They have also conferred great benefits. You will find both sorts in this series. Even "good" leaders must be regarded with a certain wariness. Leaders are not demigods; they put on their trousers one leg after another just like ordinary mortals. No leader is infallible, and every leader needs to be reminded of this at regular intervals. Irreverence irritates leaders but is their salvation. Unquestioning submission corrupts leaders and demeans followers. Making a cult of a leader is always a mistake. Fortunately hero worship generates its own antidote. "Every hero," said Emerson, "becomes a bore at last."

The signal benefit the great leaders confer is to embolden the rest of us to live according to our own best selves, to be active, insistent, and resolute in affirming our own sense of things. For great leaders attest to the reality of human freedom against the supposed inevitabilities of history. And they attest to the wisdom and power that may lie within the most unlikely of us, which is why Abraham Lincoln remains the supreme example of great leadership. A great leader, said Emerson, exhibits new possibilities to all humanity. "We feed on genius. . . . Great men exist that there may be greater men."

Great leaders, in short, justify themselves by emancipating and empowering their followers. So humanity struggles to master its destiny, remembering with Alexis de Tocqueville: "It is true that around every man a fatal circle is traced beyond which he cannot pass; but within the wide verge of that circle he is powerful and free; as it is with man, so with communities." ■



Turkey
BULGARIA
RUSSIA
GEORGIA
T'bilisi
AZER.
ARMENIA
Yerevan
AZER.
GRE.
Istanbul
Zonguldak
Adapazari
Bursa
Ankara
Trabzon
Sivas
Erzurum
Eskişehir
Kütahya
TURKEY
Izmir
Elâzig
Malatya
Diyarbakir
IRAN
Maraş
Adana
Antalya
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CHAPTER

1

A Land Between Two Peoples

The Republic of Turkey has come a long way toward inviting the modern world into its ancient land. In the past two decades, developers have built hotels throughout the largest city of Istanbul. Supermarkets have cropped up everywhere. New restaurants have opened and sidewalk cafes now cater to a new generation of young professional workers carrying cell phones and electronic day planners.

In the early 1980s a single state-run television station broadcast in black and white throughout the country for just a few hours each night. By the 1990s there were fifteen national television stations in Turkey. Hundreds of local stations dotted the airwaves around the country's long coastline and across the expanse of its inland plateau.

At the end of 1992 one television producer, anticipating modern Turkish tastes in entertainment, brought a British game show to



The sun sets over an Istanbul mosque, November 2003. This ancient city, formerly called Constantinople and before that Byzantium, has been the seat of popes, emperors, and sultans throughout the centuries.

Turkish television. In a format that is relatively tame compared with many Western reality television shows, contestants played for a chance to win a blind date. When the game ended the two winning couples would go out together as a foursome. The British producer, knowing that well over 90 percent of Turks are Muslims, tried to be sensitive to the conservative cultural views in the country. So, he toned down the flirting that usually went on during the show, and when the winning couples did go out, they were accompanied by a chaperone.

Nonetheless, the British show did offend some people in Turkey, particularly members of conservative Islamic religious and political groups. They claimed the show promoted immoral behavior and was demeaning to both the men and women participating. The Welfare Party in Istanbul, the political group most closely tied to Islam, actually made an attempt to prosecute the producers of the program for obscenity. Meanwhile, the host of the show, a Turkish personality, received hate mail and was called names in public.

Shortly after the show debuted, in the beginning of 1993, the chairman of the Welfare Party, a political newcomer by the name of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, complained to Britain's BBC television. "This sort of program is going to destroy Turkish people's beliefs, customs and family life," claimed the forty-year-old Muslim politician.

A few months later Erdoğan (pronounced HER doe han) was running for mayor of Istanbul as the Welfare Party candidate. He was the protégé of the party's founder, Necmettin Erbakan, a former deputy prime minister of Turkey who had once been imprisoned and banned from taking part in politics. It is not unusual for a Turkish politician to have spent time in jail. That is the way things are done there. At least that was the way they *were* done. Erdoğan could only hope that things had changed.

The Welfare Party felt that Turkey should turn away from Europe and form a closer relationship with its neighbors in the Middle East. The party advocated pulling out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), dominated by the Europeans and Americans, to which Turkey had belonged since 1952. The Welfare Party also proposed that the secular (nonreligious) government of Turkey adopt some Islamic laws, such as requiring women to wear headscarves when they went out in public. Erdoğan talked about inviting fashion designer Pierre Cardin to come to Istanbul to demonstrate the appropriate Islamic way of dressing for women.

Some educated Turkish women were afraid of the Welfare Party. They feared it might curb their newly won rights if it brought back Islam's strict rules dictating how women should dress and behave. Yet the Welfare Party was able to recruit many women as volunteers in Erdoğan's campaign. Tayyip Erdoğan's own wife, Ermine, wore the old-fashioned religious headscarf, and as in days of old, she rarely appeared in public with her husband. But no Islamic law stopped her from organizing the women of Istanbul to hand out leaflets and help get out the vote for her husband.

The political campaign that year was a tough one throughout all of Turkey. The separatist Kurds—Turkey's main minority group—boycotted the election, and seventeen Kurdish rebels were killed in clashes with the military during the week of the election.

Each political party charged the others with corruption. The Welfare Party received funding from Islamic interests in other countries around the Middle East. As a result, the party took a hard line against those Kurd separatists who were inciting unrest in the eastern part of Turkey, near the border with Iraq and Iran. None of the governments in the Middle East—least of all those of Iraq and Iran which have large Kurdish minorities of their own—wanted the Kurds to increase their power and position.

On March 29, 1994, election returns came in. Around the country the largest middle-of-the-road political group, the True Path Party, received the most votes—but not by much. In all, True Path candidates won only 22 percent of the total vote.

The prime minister of Turkey and the leader of the True Path Party, a woman named Tansu Çiller, was disappointed in her poor showing for the True Path Party. The True Path Party's main rival, another mainstream group called the Motherland Party, ran a close second. The upstart Welfare Party came in a surprisingly strong third, with 18 percent of the vote. To add insult to injury, the Welfare Party won the

mayor's race in more than twenty Turkish cities, including the two most important: Ankara, the capital; and Istanbul, the largest city in the country.

In Istanbul, followers of the Welfare Party soon began talking about bringing more religious values to city government. They wanted to cancel liquor licenses at city restaurants because drinking liquor goes against the precepts of Islam. Newly-elected mayor Tayyip Erdoğan also announced that he wanted to clean up parts of Istanbul and close any morally questionable establishments. Plans were made for building a new mosque in the central square in the old part of the city.

"We come from the East," said one young Turk who supported Erdoğan and the Islamists. "And our culture belongs there, not in the West." This young man, as well as members of the Welfare Party, felt that Turkey had grown too close to Europe, that Turkish society was drowning under a flood of cultural influences from the West. The tourists, the television programs, the casual dress code, the relaxed attitudes toward love and sex, and the lack of respect for religious traditions were prime examples of negative Western influences. Many Turks were happy to have a new government that was true to their Muslim roots.

This conflict between European and Asian influence—between progress and tradition, democracy and religion—has been going on for a long time in Turkey. The original Turks had come from the East and created the great Ottoman Empire, a Muslim dynasty that for hundreds of years ruled northern Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans in Eastern Europe. For most of the twentieth century, Turkey tried to Westernize, strengthening its ties to Europe. Now with the Welfare Party and its new champion Tayyip Erdoğan at the political forefront, the issue of East versus West would once again be a source of debate. Along Turkey's varied coastline and across the great Anatolian Plateau, from remote mountain village to crowded seaside resorts, people were talking politics.

A COUNTRY OF CONTRASTS

To understand the conflicting forces in Turkey, you need only look at where Turkey lies on the map. It sits on a vast peninsula in a corner of Asia, with a little finger—roughly 3 percent of its land mass—sticking into Europe. The country's largest and most historic city, Istanbul, straddles the waterway that separates Europe and Asia.

At roughly 1000 miles wide and 400 miles tall, the nation of Turkey is larger than France and larger than Germany. It is, in fact, larger than any country in Europe except for Russia. Turkey is made up mostly of a high, arid plain called the Anatolian Plateau, surrounded on three sides by rugged mountains that meet the sea. The country has more than four thousand miles of coastline. To the north lies the Black Sea and beyond that, Russia; to the west is the Aegean Sea, scattered with hundreds of Greek islands; in the south, the warm waters of the Mediterranean lap at Turkey's shores.

The overwhelming majority of Turks are Muslims, but they are not Arabs. The Turks originally came from Asia and ethnically are more closely related to the Mongols. While the Turks have deep-seated connections to Asia, for centuries they have also flirted with Western values and European styles. During the Middle Ages, Christians from Europe ruled this land, not just for a little while, but for a thousand years.

The tiny part of Turkey that lies in Europe is called Thrace. Bordering Greece and Bulgaria, it is a land of rolling hills dotted with pastoral villages and farms that produce grapes, figs, and olives. Thrace is the gateway to Europe, through the Balkan countries of Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, which were once ruled by the Turks. On the southeastern tip of Thrace lies the crown jewel of Turkey—the city of Istanbul—positioned on the vital seaway that links the Black Sea to the Aegean, and the Mediterranean and Atlantic beyond.

The waters that separate Thrace from Asia and the rest of Turkey are dominated by yet another sea, the Sea of Marmara,

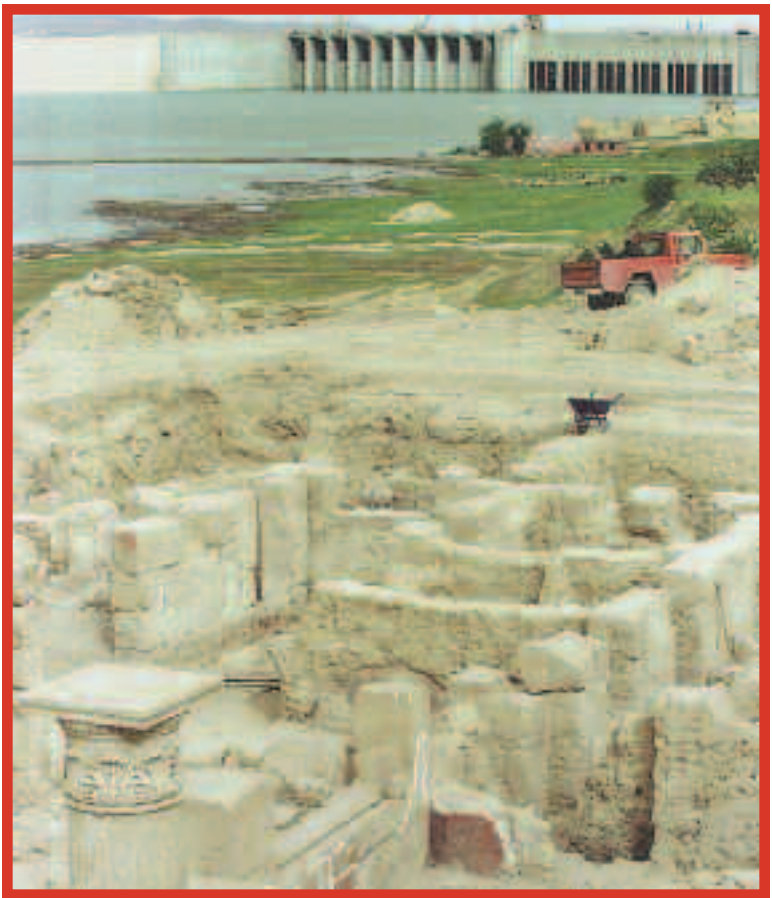
which, at less than 50 miles across, has been called the smallest sea in the world. The western end of this tiny sea opens up to the Aegean, through a narrow channel called the Dardanelles. The eastern end connects to the Black Sea through the twenty-mile-long Bosphorus Strait.

Turkey's largest city, Istanbul, sprawls across the Bosphorus. It is the only city in the world to span two continents. Ancient palaces and mosques with their tall slim towers mark the skyline. High above the Bosporus stands the palace known as Topkapi. From here the sultans and caliphs of the great Muslim dynasty known as the Ottoman Empire ruled their lands for some six hundred years.

Below Topkapi lies Saint Sophia, also called Hagia Sophia (pronounced AH·ya SOH·va). This enormous structure was built as a Christian church almost fifteen hundred years ago, when Istanbul was ruled by the Christians and was known as Constantinople. After the Muslims took over, they converted the church into a mosque. Then in the twentieth century, with the founding of the democratic Republic of Turkey, Western-oriented leaders turned Saint Sophia into a museum.

Rich in history, the city of Istanbul was founded some twenty-six hundred years ago as a small trading center originally called Byzantium. It became famous, however, as the seat of three empires: the Roman, the Byzantine, and the Ottoman. The Romans came first, expanding south and east across the Mediterranean. They incorporated Byzantium into the eastern part of their empire and for hundreds of years ruled all of what is now Turkey and beyond.

In about the year 330 the Roman Emperor Constantine, the first emperor to become a Christian, moved from Rome to Byzantium and transferred the seat of imperial power to this city by the sea. The emperor renamed the city after himself, and for the next thousand years Constantinople stood as the shining city of the Christian world. In 1453, the city was conquered by the Turkish Ottomans, and it has been known as



A view of the 2,000-year-old Zeugma archeological site shows a dam in the background, near Belkis, a village on the banks of the Euphrates River, in southeast Turkey. The dam is part of the South East Anatolia Project; this site, as well as other archaeological finds, are likely to be underwater once the area is flooded.

Istanbul ever since—a name that harkens back to the original Greek term for "to the city."

Today Istanbul consists of three main districts: Stamboul and Beyoglu on the European side of the Bosphorus, and Uskudar on the Asian side. Stamboul is the most ancient part of the

city, home to Topkapi palace and the Saint Sophia museum. Stamboul is also home to two famous markets: the Spice Market, a noisy, crowded place that features food and produce from lands near and far; and the Grand Bazaar, which boasts over four thousand shops spanning some fifty acres—all under one roof—and caters to tourists in search of souvenirs as well as Turks who shop for clothes, hardware, and other everyday items.

Beyoglu, also in Europe, lies across a small inlet called the Golden Horn. Beyoglu is Istanbul's main business district, and has historically been home to many foreigners who came to the city seeking their fortune. It was also the eastern terminus of the legendary Orient Express train that traveled through Eastern Europe from Germany. Across the Bosporus, on the Asian side, is Uskudar, a newer part of the city that is home to tracts of suburban housing as well as modern shops and office buildings.

Thrace and Istanbul form the cultural and intellectual centers of Turkey, but the country's heart and soul lie in Asia. To the south of the Sea of Marmara is the industrial center of Bursa, the country's fourth largest city. Further west, and to the south of the Dardenelles, is the ancient city of Troy on the Aegean coast.

The Trojan wars, and the familiar story of the Trojan horse, were once thought to be legends handed down by Homer's epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. According to legend, the beautiful Helen, queen of the Greek city of Sparta, was abducted and held captive in the city of Troy. The legend tells of the Greeks mounting an army and laying siege to the city for ten long years, until they devised a plan to hide Greek soldiers in a hollow wooden horse and present it to the Trojans as a gift. Archeologists have now demonstrated that people have actually lived in Troy for at least three thousand years, and there is indeed a Trojan horse in Troy—not the original, but a model based on images from pottery and coins found at the site.

The Aegean coastline has been a crossroad of civilizations for thousands of years, as one group after another has come to love its beauty and appreciate its strategic location. Even today,

unfortunately, Turkey and Greece argue over fishing grounds and oil drilling rights along the coastline and around its many offshore islands.

This western end of Turkey is also most susceptible to devastating earthquakes. One such earthquake, in August 1999, struck in the middle of the night, measuring a 7.0 on the Richter scale. It destroyed some three hundred thousand homes and killed close to twenty thousand people. An aftershock a few months later was even stronger, but proved less tragic as it hit in a more remote area. Nevertheless, the aftershock claimed some nine hundred victims and left another eighty thousand people homeless.

Further down the Aegean coast is Izmir (once known as Smyrna), the site of a decisive battle in 1923 between the Turks and the Greeks in the Turkish War of Independence. Today Izmir is Turkey's third-largest city and it serves as an important economic center and port.

Below Izmir, the Aegean Sea merges into the Mediterranean and the coastline winds eastward until it touches Syria, Turkey's Arabic neighbor to the south. The Italian adventurer Marco Polo is known to have visited this area while looking for a trade route to the Orient. Later, these waters harbored fearsome Turkish pirates who preyed on Mediterranean shipping vessels. Today, the area is known as the Turkish Riviera. Its warm waters, lively resorts, and beckoning beaches attract tourists from all over Europe and the Middle East.

One modern sore spot lies off this southern coast of Turkey: the island of Cyprus. Hot in the summer and wet in the winter, it nevertheless offers prime agricultural land. Some forty thousand ethnic Turks and about twice as many Greeks make the island their home. Most of them have lived here for generations, and they have been at each other's throats for almost as long. This simmering conflict has been quite detrimental to modern Turkey's foreign relations and is a thorn in the side of Turkey's prime minister to this day.

North of the Turkish Riviera rise the Taurus Mountains. They separate the seacoast from the mainland plateau of Anatolia, and historically have cut off the inland farmers and sheepherders from their coastal cousins. The thousand-mile-long mountain range also affects the climate. The coast is mild and damp, while the inland plateau is high and dry, suffering from blistering heat in the summer and bitter cold in the winter. Yet the Anatolian Plateau forms the heartland of Turkey—a huge, burnt-yellow, grassy plain that stretches as far as the eye can see. Sometimes, however, when summer dust storms blow a fine sandy powder across the land, that view is not very clear.

Anatolia is an agricultural region used primarily for grazing animals: mostly the sheep that produce wool used to weave Turkish carpets, and the lambs featured in Turkish shish kabob. Patches of green dot the landscape where farmers have access to irrigation. The water allows them to grow wheat, barley, corn, and cotton, and even a few fruits and flowers.

The most important city in Anatolia is Ankara, the Turkish capital and the country's second-largest metropolitan area. Settled over three thousand years ago, the cityscape is punctuated by an ancient fortress that sits high atop a hill. Since being named the nation's capital when the republic was founded in 1923, Ankara has expanded to include a population of over four million people. It is now a modern city with skyscrapers, government buildings, national museums, and respected universities.

The Anatolian Plateau, also known as Asia Minor, slowly rises in elevation from near the seacoast in the west to the high mountains in the east that separate Turkey from its eastern neighbors of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. (These three countries were part of the Soviet Union until they declared independence in 1991.) Approximately one hundred mountain peaks in eastern Turkey rise over ten thousand feet above sea level. Snow-topped Mount Ararat stands the tallest at almost seventeen thousand feet. Legend has it that Noah's ark landed on Mount Ararat after the flood, and even today expeditions

trek to this remote part of the country looking for evidence that would prove the biblical story.

To the south of Ararat, through remote mountain passes, lie Iran and Iraq. The mountains are home to the Kurds, Muslims like the Turks, but ethnically different. The Kurdish homeland spreads across eastern Turkey, as well as eastern Syria and the northern parts of Iraq and Iran. The Kurds have been fighting for independence for decades, using political pressure and occasionally violence, but Middle Eastern governments have given them no official land of their own. Indeed, the government of Turkey has, until recently, refused to even recognize the Kurds as a separate ethnic group and has banned official use of the language or expression of their cultural traditions. The issue of Kurdish independence has complicated Turkish politics for generations and threatens to do so for many more.

The eastern highlands of Turkey also form the source of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which flow south through Syria and Iraq to the Persian Gulf. The area between the rivers, known as the Fertile Crescent, was home to some of the earliest civilizations, starting with the Sumerians some fifty-five hundred years ago. The town of Urfa, located between the Tigris and Euphrates, was home to the biblical character Job, while the prophet Abraham was supposedly born in a nearby cave. Some say the area of rolling hills in southeastern Turkey between the Tigris and Euphrates was the site of the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve were brought to life.

In modern times, this area is the site of the South East Anatolia Project, a complex of dams and hydroelectric plants—including Atatürk Dam on the Euphrates River, the sixth-largest dam in the world—that produce much of Turkey's electricity. The project has drawn criticism from environmentalists and also from Syria and Iraq, two countries downstream that worry about the impact of altering the flow of the rivers. Nevertheless, the project goes forward and will eventually irrigate some thirty thousand acres of dry land to make them suitable for farming.



In this March 2003 photo, Kurds celebrate the Newroz festival, marking the first day of spring. Kurdish separatists have been at odds with the Turkish government for decades. The Kurds, who make up about one-fifth of the Turkish population, are now allowed to express their culture, but their desire for a country of their own is still denied.

On the northern edge of Anatolia, along the top of Turkey, the Pontus Mountains separate these great plains from the Black Sea. This northern seacoast is no tourist destination; instead, it is a damp and rainy place that is home to fishermen, traders, and farmers. Ancient merchants from Europe settled here, and several coastal towns, such as Trabzon, became important stops along the Silk Road, an ancient web of trade routes between China and Europe. In Trabzon, precious wares from the East—silk, porcelain, pepper, and silver—were loaded onto ships and galleys and transported west through the Bosporus and Dardanelles and on to the cities of Europe.

Some forty miles east of Trabzon sits the smaller coastal town of Rize, set amidst pine-covered mountains and lush, thickly grown valleys. Rize is a center of the tea industry. Bright green bushes cover the hillsides. Downtown Rize boasts several tea processing and packing factories.

Even tiny Rize—just like Trabzon and most of the rest of Turkey for that matter—is shaped by the influence of two cultures. In the middle of Rize stands a mosque that was constructed in the sixteenth century, as well as the remains of a castle built by Christians from Europe who were once drawn here by the nearby trade routes.

Rize is also the home of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's family. Erdoğan's father, Ahmet, was brought up here in a devout Muslim family. Just before World War II, like many others seeking opportunity for themselves and a better life for their children, he migrated to Istanbul.

Ahmet found work as a captain for a state maritime company and settled into a home in the working-class area called Kasimpasa, in the Beyoglu sector of Istanbul. It was here in this rough city district, known for its muggers and small-time crooks, where Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the future mayor of Istanbul, one of five children, was born on February 26, 1954.

CHAPTER

2

Ancient Inheritance

When Tayyip Erdoğan was young, in the 1950s, Turkey was a stable but poor country, at peace with its neighbors and at rest with its own people. Tayyip Erdoğan grew up in an authoritarian family and his father, Ahmet, was very strict. Once, when young Tayyip used bad language, his father reportedly punished him by hanging him by his arms from the ceiling of the house.

Tayyip exhibited his ambition at an early age. In order to make money, he sold lemonade and Turkish buns on the rough streets of his Kasimpasa neighborhood. For fun, Tayyip flew kites and shot marbles and played in the muddy alleyways throughout the Beyoglu section of Istanbul. He was known as a serious child and a fierce competitor. "Everyone respected him here, and called him Big Brother," one childhood friend recalled.

In the 1950s, the Republic of Turkey was finding its way as a new democracy. The Republic was founded in 1923, after World War I, when a man named Mustafa Kemal—later known as Atatürk or the Father of the Turks—forced out European armies and cemented together the remnants of the old Ottoman Empire.

But in every other way, the country of Turkey and the city of Istanbul are quite ancient—going back as far as the cradle of civilization. And the legacy of all that history bears heavily on the Turkish people today, as well as those who would rule them.

People have inhabited Turkey since the dawn of time. Perhaps as long as six hundred thousand years ago, people lived in caves, hunted animals, and gathered food. Eventually these prehistoric people began to build crude houses, grow crops, raise animals, and settle into villages.

By 2000 B.C., new tribes began migrating into Anatolia from the north and east. The first real civilization was created by a people called the Hittites, who built a capital at Hattusa in central Anatolia, not too far from today's Ankara. They ruled from approximately 1650 B.C. to 1200 B.C., and at the time rivaled Egypt as one of the two superpowers in the world. Even after they collapsed and split into a number of smaller independent groups, the Hittites left behind the ruins of their buildings and temples—some of which can still be seen today—and thousands of clay tablets that recorded their history and religious beliefs.

Colonists from Greece began to settle along Turkey's western coast around 1000 B.C. They constructed coastal villages and eventually built them into strong cities. But during the sixth century B.C., armies from Persia (now known as Iran) came and conquered Anatolia all the way to the Aegean Sea. Then, in the fourth century B.C., Alexander the Great rallied the Greeks and came back to conquer the Aegean coast once again, bringing with him an early form of democracy and reestablishing Greek cities complete with temples, museums, and theaters.

Greek power faded once again over the next hundred years as the Romans began to conquer lands all around the Mediterranean, including much of Anatolia. Eventually the Roman Empire ruled most of the Middle East, bringing an advanced civilization with a central government, a written legal system, and sophisticated construction techniques. For example, the Romans developed a way to mortar bricks together and they built temples, stadiums, and numerous other buildings using arches and colonnades. They also channeled water into their cities via aqueducts and built a network of paved roads and stone bridges connecting the cities throughout the peninsula.

Rome flourished for several hundred years, until it too began to decline. Eventually the Roman Empire was divided into a Latin-speaking western half, headquartered in Rome, and a Greek-speaking eastern half centered in Constantinople, the city on the banks of the Bosporus.

About the year 330, the Roman Emperor Constantine decided to move his government to Byzantium. When he arrived he renamed the city after himself, and Constantinople began to grow in importance and influence. After Rome was overrun by German invaders in 476, the Byzantine rulers of Constantinople became the main guardians of Christianity. The city became the center of an empire that, at its peak, stretched from southern Europe across the Middle East and over most of northern Africa.

Constantinople also grew to be a center of art and culture. Its most powerful emperor, Justinian, who ruled from 527 to 565, constructed many gardens, squares, and parks, as well as churches and monasteries. His most famous work was the basilica Hagia Sophia, decorated with marble, gold, pearls, and gems. Some ten thousand craftsmen took five years to build the church, which to this day is considered a masterpiece of Byzantine art.

During the time of Justinian, Constantinople boasted some six hundred thousand inhabitants. The main language was

Greek—as it was throughout Asia Minor—but the people called themselves Romans and their legal system was held over from the Roman Empire. By this time most Romans had converted to Christianity. The emperor was considered God's human representative and the empire was thought to be a reflection of God's heaven.

PEOPLE FROM THE EAST

Like other empires that came before and after, the Byzantine world eventually began to decay and lose its influence and power. Nomads from central Asia, called Seljuks, began pushing west toward Anatolia in the eleventh century. They were part of a larger movement of people out of central Asia during the first millennium, driven by climate changes, increased population, and pressure from their stronger neighbors.

As they drifted into the Middle East, the Seljuks encountered Islam, a religion based on the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. The prophet lived from about 570 to 632 and spread his faith through much of the Arabian Peninsula, south of the Byzantine Empire. The Seljuks found Islam more appealing than Christianity and slowly began to convert to this new religion, which colored their whole outlook on life. As one historian explained, "Islam served as a new bond among all those Turks who professed it. It was not simply a method of worship or a narrow religious creed, but a way of life. . . . Law and state, society and culture, were built on and permeated by Islam."

By the mid-eleventh century, the Seljuks had developed a state that covered much of central Asia, from the borders of India west to Asia Minor. In the year 1055 Togrel Bey, the Sultan of the Seljuks, took over Baghdad (now the capital of Iraq), and the Islamic caliph bestowed on Bey the title "Ruler of the World."

Soon the Seljuks met up with Byzantine forces, defending their empire in eastern Anatolia. The Seljuks were faster and fiercer, and they defeated the Byzantines. The Seljuks

consolidated their control over the Anatolian Plateau, and before long, they stood at the gates of Constantinople, threatening the Christian world.

The Byzantine emperor called on the Crusaders to save his city, and they responded. Over the next thirty years the medieval knights rode in from Europe and fought back the Seljuks. War between the Crusaders and the Seljuks continued off and on for some two hundred years. The Seljuks lost some ground here and there, but more and more Turkish people kept pushing westward out of Asia, and their hold on Anatolia became stronger than ever.

Under pressure from the Europeans, the Seljuks divided into smaller states; there were Syrian Seljuks, Iraqi Seljuks, the Anatolian Seljuks, and each of these states in turn split up into smaller groups. Even though there was no central government, no well-organized state control, trade continued to flourish across Anatolia, as goods shuttled back and forth between Asia and Europe. The Seljuks built and maintained trade routes with stops along the way where the caravans could rest, feed and water the camels, and stay overnight in the safety of an outpost.

Various tribes and splinter groups of the Seljuks thrived in the Middle East. They maintained an uneasy truce with their Christian neighbors to the west, fending them off with one hand while trading with them with the other. In the 1200s Seljuk leadership strengthened once again, bringing together various groups and winning military battles against the Christians. About the year 1290 a warrior named Osman founded the Osmanli dynasty, known in the West as the Ottoman Empire. Over the years he and his descendents expanded their holdings by defeating the Christians in battle and taking over Islamic areas either by purchase or through marriage.

Osman's successor, Orhan, was the first to cross the Dardanelles and establish a base in Europe at a place called Gallipoli. His son in turn annexed most of Thrace. Soon the Ottomans controlled much of the Balkans. By 1400 all



A battle from the Crusades is depicted in this drawing from about 1250. The first Crusade, launched in 1096 by Pope Urban II, sought to reclaim Jerusalem from the "barbarian" Turks and to ensure safe passage for Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Crusaders also helped defend the city of Constantinople, seat of the Roman emperor.

that remained of the old Byzantine Empire was the city of Constantinople, along with a few scattered outposts including one at Trabzon on the Black Sea coast. Constantinople was like a medieval version of East Berlin during the Cold War—not actually fighting with the enemy, but surrounded and cut off from its European allies. During its last days, Constantinople could only be supplied by Venetian traders who controlled the seas.

In 1453, Mehmet II, on becoming sultan of the Ottomans, laid siege to the city. He hired an engineer from Hungary to cast a battery of cannons. He assembled a fleet of more than one hundred boats and mustered some one hundred thousand

troops to attack the heavily fortified walls protecting the city. The ruins of the walls and the towers, and the sixty-foot-wide moat that protected Constantinople, can still be seen today outside Istanbul.

Constantine XI, the last of the Byzantine emperors, had only seven thousand men to defend the ramparts. For more than a month the sultan's cannons shelled the walls to break down the fortifications, and his men attacked the stockade to weaken defenses. The night before the final assault, Constantine prayed inside the Hagia Sophia. Then he took up a position on the walls. Wave after wave of Turks charged against the defenders, until most of the Christians had either died or fled. Constantine himself reportedly fought to the bitter end, finally hurling himself into the oncoming Turks, never to be seen again. With that, the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, putting an end to the Byzantine Empire—and the Middle Ages as well.

After taking over Constantinople and renaming it Istanbul, the Ottomans continued to expand, fighting the Serbs, the Bulgarians and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the West, and pushing south and east into the Middle East. During the reign of Sultan Selim I, the Ottomans conquered Egypt. Under Selim's son, Süleyman the Magnificant, who enjoyed a long reign from 1520 to 1566, the Ottomans reached their zenith, ranging across northern Africa, through the Middle East, and into Eastern Europe to the gates of Vienna. An impressive list of great cities—Mecca, Jerusalem, Damascus, Cairo, Tunis, and Baghdad—lay under Ottoman rule.

The Ottomans laid siege to Vienna, first in 1529 under Süleyman the Magnificent, and then twice more in 1664 and 1683, but they never broke through. And that proved to be the limit of Ottoman expansion into Europe.

Soon after, European powers began to push the Ottomans back south, conquering once again Hungary and some areas of the Balkans. But the Ottoman expansion explains why, to this

day, the Balkans are home to many Muslims—descendents of those who either came with the Ottomans or were conquered by the Ottomans.

A REPUBLIC IS BORN

In total, the Ottomans ruled for six centuries and developed one of the most advanced cultures of the era. The Ottoman government was tolerant and held together many peoples of different races, languages, and religions. Greeks and Armenians who were not Muslims made up roughly half of Istanbul's population until the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Jews—including many fleeing persecution in Europe—settled in a number of towns along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts.

But the Ottomans were slow to recognize the rising political, economic, and cultural power that came from Europe beginning with the Renaissance. Spain, France, and England sent explorers around Africa to China, and west across the Atlantic to the Americas. As these seafarers developed new trade routes, the overland passage to Asia across Anatolia began to decline. Meanwhile, the Ottomans were constantly fighting one European nation or another as they sought to defend their expansive empire. At various times the Ottomans waged war with Spain, Portugal, Poland, Austria, Russia, and Greece.

The cost of war, and slow decline in trade, eventually caused huge economic problems for the Ottomans. They were forced to borrow money from other countries while raising taxes on their own traders and merchants. Corruption spread; various political factions began to work against the Ottomans; and the sultans and their advisors became increasingly disconnected from the people they ruled.

In the nineteenth century, the Ottomans tried to modernize their country and reform its political institutions. But it was too little, too late. By 1844 Tsar Nicholas of Russia was referring to the Ottoman Empire as the "sick man of Europe."

In 1876 Sultan Abdül Hamid II ascended to power and pushed through a constitution modeled after those of European countries. Under leadership that lasted until 1909, he created a parliament, guaranteed freedom of religion, and offered expanded freedom of speech. However, his commitment to democracy was weaker than his desire to stay in power. As soon as opposition arose, he disbanded the constitution and repressed his critics.

Reacting to the sultan's false promises, groups of students and young military officers began to conspire against the government. One officer, Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk), organized a secret society which later merged with others to form a political group called the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Followers became known as the "Young Turks" and they sought to bring back the 1876 constitution.

Eventually the CUP pressed Abdül Hamid into holding parliamentary elections. The CUP won all but one of the seats. But as soon as the Young Turks gained power, they began to argue and fight amongst themselves: nationalists against reformers, and traditional Muslims against non-Turkish groups, such as the Kurds, who wanted more autonomy. Turkey suffered from an increasingly chaotic situation, until Abdül Hamid was finally forced to abdicate in 1909, and was succeeded by his brother. But things got even worse.

European powers, seeing a weakened country, pounced on Turkey and seized portions of the empire. An alliance of Balkan countries took back all of Turkey's European holdings, except the small section of Thrace near Istanbul.

In 1913 a member of the Young Turks, a man named Enver Pasha, engineered a coup and soon a small group of army officers formed a military dictatorship. When World War I broke out in 1914, these men turned to their only friends left in Europe, the Germans, and allied themselves against England, France, and Russia.

The Ottomans were defeated in the east by the Russians, who were aided by their friends and fellow Christians, the Armenians. In retaliation, during the winter months of 1915, an angry and bitter Turkish army took out its frustration on Armenians living in eastern Turkey. The military forced civilian Armenians out of the country, chasing them into Syria or Russia, and killing thousands of innocent villagers and refugees along the way. Estimates of lives lost from the violence, as well as from starvation and exposure, range from half a million people to well over one million. Today, Armenians have their own country. It split off from the Soviet Union after the communist country broke up in 1989. Armenia, on Turkey's eastern border, holds a deep-seated grudge against its neighbor, made all the worse by the fact that the Turks have never admitted that such a massacre ever took place.

Amidst the defeat and humiliation of World War I, there was one moment of Ottoman glory. In 1915 the British made an effort to take over the Dardanelles and open the passage to their allies, the Russians. British forces landed on Gallipoli, an area of steep hills and rough terrain guarding the entrance to the Sea of Marmara. The British met a determined group of Turks, led by Mustafa Kemal, and the Turks decided to stand their ground.

Fighting lasted for weeks. The British launched three major attacks, but the Turks held them off. Finally, the British abandoned the effort and evacuated their forces. Kemal and his men saved the Bosporus and Dardenelles, as well as Istanbul, from falling to the enemy.

During the four years of World War I, Turkey lost an estimated two million civilians, plus at least another three hundred thousand soldiers killed in action. The victorious European allies forced the country to give up its holdings in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine. At the end of the war, Mustafa Kemal, hero of Gallipoli, was the sole military leader who commanded any respect from soldiers or politicians. As the

empire crumbled, he was placed in charge of the Turkish army, and he withdrew with his forces into Anatolia.

It soon became clear that the European allies would not be content to carve off the outlying areas of the Ottoman Empire. They were preparing to divide Turkey. European troops were stationed in Istanbul with British warships anchored in the Sea of Marmara. The defeated Ottoman sultan was prepared to do whatever the allies wanted. In the east the Europeans laid plans to create an independent Armenian republic and as well as an autonomous Kurdish region. The rest of the country would be carved up into colonies to benefit the Greeks, the Italians, and the French.

The Greek government made the first move to put these plans into action. The Greeks landed a small military force on the Aegean coastline, near Smyrna, in May 1919. When news reached Mustafa Kemal, he decided the patriotic path was not to follow the sultan, but instead to organize a resistance. Kemal toured the Anatolia countryside to recruit former soldiers and ordinary civilians to his cause, claiming the sultan was no longer their true leader. He then called together a group of men in Ankara and laid out his plans to form an alternative government. It would be a new regime, separate from the old Ottoman Empire —a democracy that would bring the Turks together and preserve their homeland from being colonized by European powers.

The sultan, who was ready to deal with the Europeans, was not prepared to give up the country to Kemal, however. With support from the British, he decreed that Mustafa Kemal was an outlaw. Some of Kemal's nationalists were arrested in Istanbul; others got away and fled to Ankara to join the rebellion. One of his supporters, a woman, fled Istanbul with her husband. The two of them crossed the Bosporus in a small boat, disguised as a provincial religious leader and his peasant wife. They were hidden from the authorities in a Muslim building until they could meet up with some fellow nationalists and make the overland journey to Ankara.



Patriots made a large Turkish flag to celebrate the victory of Smyrna (modern Izmir), in October 1922. The city was ceded to Greece after World War I by the Treaty of Sèvres but was seized by Turkish troops. The Treaty of Lausanne later gave Turkey custody of the city.

Meanwhile, the Greek army began to move inland from Smyrna. The French advanced from their bases in the Middle East to take over areas in southern Turkey. The Kurds revolted in the southeastern part of the country. The Armenians began an offensive in the northeast.

But Kemal's strength grew as people joined his movement. His nationalist army beat back the Armenians in the east. One of Kemal's key generals, Ismet Pasha, stopped the Greeks at a town called Inönü. This laid the groundwork for Kemal to push the Greek army back to the coast and finally, in 1922, force them to evacuate Smyrna.

The French retreated and the British finally backed off as well. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, assigned the remaining lands of the Ottoman Empire to the Turkey of



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), a Turkish general and nationalist leader, became president of the new Republic of Turkey at its formation in 1923, thus marking the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Mustafa Kemal. The new Turkish leader created a Turkish National Assembly, and together the delegates resolved that the Ottoman sultan no longer ruled the country. From Istanbul, the sultan boarded a British ship and fled the country.

Kemal developed the phrase: "Turkey for the Turks"—a nationalistic slogan designed to cement the idea of Turkey as a new country. It meant that foreigners were not welcome. Anyone living in Turkey would pledge their allegiance to the country, not to their particular religion or ethnic group, and if they were not prepared to do that they had to go somewhere else. Many ethnic Greeks still living in Turkey fled the country and moved back to Greece. In exchange, a number of people of Turkish heritage living in Greece and the Balkans moved back to Turkey. But other minorities, particularly the Kurds, had no place to go. They were supposed to be Turks now, but while they shared a religion, they still had different customs, a different language, and a different ethnic background.

On October 24, 1923, the National Assembly proclaimed the emergence of the Republic of Turkey, completing the break with the Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Kemal, who took the name Atatürk, was chosen as the first president. He appointed his chief lieutenant, Ismet Pasha, prime minister. And as Kemal took the name Atatürk, Ismet took the name Inönü, after the place of his great victory over the Greeks.

The capital was officially moved from Istanbul to Ankara. The Republic of Turkey was born.

CHAPTER

3

The Making of Modern Turkey

After cleansing Turkey of European invaders, Mustafa Kemal—now known as Atatürk—turned around and created a new state modeled on the very European democracies that so recently had been his enemies. He initiated a series of reforms designed to modernize Turkey and bring its political, social, and cultural customs into the twentieth century.

He urged the people of his country, for example, to throw off their traditional clothing and to begin to act and dress more like Europeans. He announced that the role of women would change drastically. No longer would they be segregated in public. He outlawed polygamy—the practice of having more than one spouse. He permitted women to marry men who were not Muslim, and granted them the right of divorce, which they had never had before. Atatürk also decreed that women would no longer be required to

wear the Islamic veil or headscarf when they appeared in public. In fact, he banned the wearing of headscarves in government buildings and schools.

In 1924 the National Assembly, which Atatürk created, adopted a new constitution to replace the old 1876 constitution that had so often been ignored but still served as the basic framework for the Turkish reform movement. The new constitution vested in the National Assembly the authority to represent the people of Turkey. Legislators would be elected every four years by universal suffrage. This meant that all citizens, including women and minorities, were able to vote.

Despite the formation of the National Assembly, however, Atatürk in effect ruled as the head of his own political party, called the Republican People's Party—known in Turkish as the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* or CHP—until his death in 1938. The central core of Atatürk's beliefs, and his party's policies, known as the "Six Arrows" of Kemalism were as follows:

1. Republicanism—The authority of the government would be invested in the nation, and not in the ruler (as it had been under the Ottomans), and political power belonged to the people through their elected representatives.

2. Nationalism—Turkish national interests and security would take precedence over international considerations, and a new national Turkish identity would replace the old Ottoman Empire.

3. Populism—All Turkish citizens would be considered equal, and all people who lived in Turkey would be considered Turks, regardless of their religion or ethnic background.

4. Reformism—The changes proclaimed by Atatürk were both legitimate and necessary for the benefit of all Turks.

5. Statism—The national government would take on a central role in directing economic activity; planning the economy; and making large-scale investments in such things as dams, roads, railroads, and electricity for the benefit of the state.

6. Secularism—There would be no more caliph in Turkey and no more official connection between state and religion; religious schools were closed and the old Islamic law (called the *Seriat*) was revoked and replaced with a legal code resembling those of many European nations.

Despite his theoretical commitment to democracy, however, Atatürk was an ex-military man who had, by all accounts, a rather authoritarian personality. He ruled his party with an iron hand. His party, and his party alone, controlled the government. He forced reforms on the citizens of Turkey, whether they wanted those reforms or not. And despite his egalitarian views about women, he forced a woman he met in Smyrna to marry him. When things did not work out, several years later, he simply decreed that they were divorced.

Not content with simply changing the nature of Turkey's legal system, Atatürk launched a campaign to Westernize the habits and culture of the country. He declared that Western music was better than traditional Middle Eastern music and organized European-style balls featuring classical music. He suggested everyone take a surname, like the Europeans did. His was to be Atatürk. Even though Turkish had been written with the Arabic alphabet for a thousand years, he introduced the Western alphabet and launched a nationwide literacy campaign. This caused consternation among devout Muslims, many of whom believe the Koran, the Muslim holy book of sacred Arabic writings, cannot be translated into other languages.

After Atatürk's death, the National Assembly voted his chief lieutenant, Ismet Inönü, as president and leader of the Republican People's Party. Inönü followed in Atatürk's footsteps,

ruling in the secular tradition of the Six Arrows of Kemalism. But Inönü's greatest success was in managing to keep Turkey out of World War II—until the very end when, two months before the Nazis surrendered, Turkey finally declared war on a defeated Germany. Then, because Turkey had participated with the Allies, it was invited in 1945 to become one of the original fifty-one members of the United Nations.

That same year, a group of Republican People's Party members proposed that certain rights guaranteed in the United Nations charter be expanded and applied to Turkey's domestic politics, including the free expression of religion. When that suggestion was turned down by Inönü and other party leaders, Turkey's first opposition party, the Democrat Party, was founded by ex-CHP members Celal Bayer and Adnan Menderes.

The Democrat Party argued for less state control of the economy, less control over people's everyday lives, and more support for private industry. This new party also gained favor in small towns and rural areas across Anatolia because it proposed increased government aid to agriculture and openly declared its support for the traditional Islamic values that had been suppressed by Atatürk and his party.

Equally important was a growing dissatisfaction among voters with the ruling bureaucracy. Many government officials, despite the revolution, were holdovers from the old Ottoman Empire. They came from the educated and military classes, and looked down at the people they ruled. They were the ones enforcing all the new secular rules, taking away many of the comforting traditions of Turks—their mosques, their prayers, their religious rhythms, even their old language—without necessarily improving their lives in any other way.

In May 1950, the Democrat Party won a majority of seats in the National Assembly, ending 27 years of one-party rule by Atatürk's old Republican People's Party. As the Democrat Party leader, Adnan Menderes became prime minister. He was the head of government who had primary responsibility for



British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, and the U.S. Secretary of State John F. Dulles sign a declaration of the Baghdad Pact Council in London, 1958. During the 1940s and 1950s, Turkey entered into a number of pacts with other countries, including Pakistan and Iraq, and these became the center of an interlocking set of agreements between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Great Britain called the Baghdad Pact. This accord was later reorganized into the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), under American leadership. In addition, Turkey applied for and was granted membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952.

developing both domestic and foreign policy. Celal Bayer was elected president by the National Assembly. His was a more ceremonial role, comprised mainly of presiding over cabinet meetings, receiving ministers of foreign states, and making appointments based on proposals of the prime minister.

The Democrat Party relaxed the laws against Islam. Religious education was allowed back in schools; more mosques were built. The government also built new roads, expanded the electric system into the countryside, and directed more resources toward agriculture. Closer ties to the West—illustrated by Turkey's admittance into NATO in 1952—brought more economic aid. The Turkish government used American money to buy new tractors and then distribute them to peasants, who in turn brought more land under cultivation.

At the same time, the expanding economic base attracted people from the countryside into the cities, looking for better, more productive work. These social and economic advances brought the Democrats an increase in its majority in the 1954 elections.

But as the 1950s wore on, the economy began to falter. In its attempts to stimulate the economy, the Turkish government had increased the country's debt and invited higher inflation. Salaries did not keep up; people's paychecks did not go as far as they once had. Eventually the politicians had to introduce austerity packages, cutting programs that had once helped the middle class.

Opposition cropped up against the Democrat Party, once the opposition party itself, but now the party in power. As the situation deteriorated, the Democrats tried to hold on by attacking their opponents. The party passed new censorship laws. It created commissions to investigate opponents. When the 1958 elections came along, the Democrats still prevailed, but with less support and fewer votes than before.

In 1960 the former president, an aging Ismet Inönü, toured central Anatolia to criticize the government and rally support for his Republican People's Party. There were outbreaks of protest against the ruling government. Prime Minister Menderes responded by suspending political rights and imposing martial law. Students who reacted by staging a protest in Istanbul were fired on by police. Several young men and women were killed.

In May 1960 the military, which had been drawn into the political fray with the imposition of martial law, seized government buildings and arrested both President Bayer and Prime Minister Menderes along with some members of the National Assembly. The chief of the Turkish general staff, Cemal Gürsel, claimed that the country was on the verge of political chaos. He dissolved the National Assembly, outlawed the Democrat Party, and announced that the military was taking over to preserve order and restore the legacy of Atatürk. He accused politicians of ignoring the constitution and trying to establish a dictatorship.

Several hundred government officials were imprisoned on a small island in the Marmara Sea. Ultimately 15 people were sentenced to death, including the former prime minister, Adnan Menderes. They were held responsible for ordering the police to fire on the Istanbul students and found guilty of various other crimes.

In prison, Menderes tried to commit suicide by taking sleeping pills he had hidden away. He was saved at the last minute and brought to a hospital. His stomach was pumped and he soon recovered. Then, on September 17, 1961, he was dragged out to the gallows and hanged to death.

Although many Turks were happy to see Menderes thrown out of office, most people were shocked at the way he was executed. Tayyip Erdoğan was seven years old at the time. But the young boy knew what was going on, and he was particularly aware of what had happened to the prime minister who dared to bring some religion back into the mainstream of Turkish life. "Some are saddened by things like this, and they give up," Erdoğan later told a reporter from *The New York Times*. "In my case, this sadness turned into an attraction for politics."

A NATION GONE WILD

Despite this gruesome side to the military coup, the generals won the support of the majority of Turkish citizens, especially the educated urban class and government workers

who were tired of the chaos and political infighting that had developed in the late 1950s. Within a year, General Gürsel formed a new National Assembly which, in turn, produced a new constitution. In 1961 some 60 percent of the Turkish electorate voted in favor of the new document, which made some modifications to the 1923 constitution but also reaffirmed the basic principles of Kemalism.

In the 1961 election, fourteen political parties fielded candidates to the new National Assembly. With such a confusion of parties, the old familiar CHP won the most votes, with 36 percent of the total. A new party formed by ex-Democrat Party members, called the Justice Party, placed a close second with 35 percent.

The former prime minister, Ismet Inönü, still head of the CHP party, formed a coalition government. But without a clear majority of support, it was a weak administration that did not accomplish much. When Inönü traveled to the United States in November 1963 to attend the funeral of assassinated President John F. Kennedy, his coalition partners took advantage of his absence and withdrew their support. Inönü rushed back to Turkey and reformed the government, which was weaker and more ineffectual than ever.

In 1965, the Justice Party came on strong with 53 percent of the vote, bringing to power 40-year-old Süleyman Demirel, a one-time protégé of Adnan Menderes. Prime Minister Demirel moved the party toward more conservative political policies, including increased defense spending and policies friendly to business. He also took a page from the Menderes book and, as best as he could with the military looking over his shoulder, supported social conservatives, the farmers in Anatolia, and religious Muslims throughout the country.

Meanwhile the political situation in Turkey became more polarized. Another politician, Bülent Ecevit, succeeded Ismet Inönü as head of the CHP, and Ecevit prodded the opposition toward more liberal leanings. He supported state-directed

institutions over private business, called for expansion of public services and an increase in taxes, and argued for improved relations with the communist Soviet Union. Ecevit also reaffirmed Atatürk's secularism, denying the revival of religious interest in the country.

A whole new crop of smaller political parties also arose during the 1960s and 1970s to represent various interests. Some parties were anti-American; others called for labor strikes; a few resorted to violence. All this chipped away at the political consensus in Turkey, and at Süleyman Demirel's majority.

In 1970, a man named Necmettin Erbakan merged several right-wing conservative parties to form a nationalistic Islamic party. Erbakan, who was from a small-town aristocratic family in Anatolia, had been sent to Germany to study as an electrical engineer. When he returned to Turkey he found work at a university before entering politics. In 1969, he won a seat in the National Assembly. Erbakan was overtly Islamist, claiming Turkey should turn its back on European-style democracy and return to *Seriat*, or traditional Islamic law. He favored better relations with other Muslim countries and less reliance on the United Nations, NATO, and the West.

Erbakan was also fiercely against communism. This, for the most part, is what kept him out of jail. While the military did not support his Islamist beliefs, they saw his views against communism as a counterbalance to Bülent Ecevit and the leftist groups that were gaining ground in the 1960s and 1970s. For more than a decade, Erbakan's Islamist Party would win between 10 and 20 percent of the vote. But because the larger parties could not muster a majority, Erbakan would be able to leverage his political power by joining with politicians who needed his support to form coalition governments.

At first, Erbakan supported Süleyman Demirel and his Justice Party. But it was not long before Erbakan went his own way, leaving Demirel to find other partners to firm up his support in the National Assembly. Amid increasing unrest in



Necmettin Erbakan makes a point at a news conference in Istanbul in 1998. A Turkish court convicted the former prime minister and Islamic leader of "provoking hatred" in a speech delivered some years before and sentenced him to a year in jail. He was banned from party politics when a high court outlawed his Welfare Party for attempting to subvert the country's secular constitution.

the country, in March 1971, the military gave Demirel an ultimatum to form a "strong and credible government" or else face a takeover by the generals. Demirel responded by resigning.

For the second time, the army took over Turkey's government. The generals arrested people associated with violent groups and trade unions, closed down publications, and installed their own appointees into leadership positions. When they called for new elections, some two years later, it was Bülent Ecevit who just barely came out on top. To form a

government he made a deal with the more conservative, nationalistic Necmettin Erbakan: Ecevit became prime minister and Erbakan was named deputy prime minister. Their pact would last just eight months and their government was only the first of a number of increasingly ineffective coalitions that would rule Turkey through the 1970s. But during their short time in power they made one crucial decision.

The island of Cyprus had been a British colony until 1960 when it won independence. The Greeks on Cyprus wanted to join up with Greece. The ethnic Turks on Cyprus wanted to partition the island into two states. Instead, a compromise left one country, the Republic of Cyprus, with a Greek president and a Turkish vice president, and a complicated arrangement to share power. It was not long before the two sides began to fight with each other. In July 1974, a pro-Greek group staged a coup, taking over the island and starting an international crisis.

Prime Minister Ecevit, with Erbakan's full support, decided to send in some thirty thousand Turkish troops to protect the Turkish minority on the island. The army quickly expanded the Turkish area of control, forcing thousands of Greeks out of their homes. Within a few days, the United Nations stepped in, stabilized the situation, and established a buffer zone between the Greek and Turkish sides. But against the ruling of the United Nations, the Turks held onto their new territory. "The fact that we have not seized the whole island is concession enough," responded hardliner Necmettin Erbakan, who as an Islamist had no interest in compromising with Christian Greeks.

A few months later the Turks on Cyprus formed their own country, and several years after that, in 1983, they declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The only other country in the world to recognize it as a legitimate state was Turkey. As a result, relations between Greece and Turkey, which had been tense ever since they clashed during the last days of the Ottoman Empire, became even further strained.



Turkish troops parachute into Cyprus, July 20, 1974, on the first day of Turkey's invasion of the island. Turkey reacted to the Cypriot National Guard's overthrow of the ruler of Cyprus, and his replacement with guerrilla Nikos Sampson, by taking over more than 30 percent of the island. The new area was named the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a country recognized only by Turkey. By pursuing military intervention in Cyprus, Turkey damaged its alliances with the United States and the European Community.

Embroiled in the crisis over Cyprus, and with the economy suffering from an increase in oil prices in the 1970s, Ecevit's government soon fell. Turkey had yet another caretaker government that limped along for one more year, while economic conditions deteriorated and political unrest continued to grow.

In March 1975 Erbakan joined with several other conservative, right-of-center parties, and they threw their support back to Süleyman Demirel, producing another Justice Party coalition that lasted almost three years. Nevertheless, it was a divided government with Demirel going one way and Erbakan another.

When Demirel lost a vote of confidence, power once again shifted to Bülent Ecevit, backed by the slimmest of majorities. But his efforts to restore the economy failed. His attempts to control civil unrest were also ineffectual. Disorder and violence once again increased until the country was on the brink of collapse. In 1977, thirty-seven people were killed in Istanbul when an ultra-leftist group staged a demonstration. In September 1978, twelve people died in clashes between Muslims in central Anatolia. In December of that year, more than one hundred people died during riots in the southeastern part of the country.

As a response, the government declared martial law in thirteen of Turkey's provinces. Within a few months, Ecevit lost support in the National Assembly, and Süleyman Demirel once again patched together a government. His approach to fixing the economy was to cut back labor costs and scale down state subsidies to government and business enterprises. The result found labor unions trying to protect their workers' standard of living by staging a series of strikes. In response, Demirel tightened curbs on labor union activities and extended martial law to other regions.

Taking advantage of political uncertainty in Ankara, extremist groups on both sides of the political spectrum resorted to more violence. Police and public officials, as well as American soldiers stationed in Turkey as part of NATO, became

targets of armed terrorists. Groups of Kurds pressing for a separate state also turned to violent activities. In two years, 1978 and 1979, as many as two thousand people are estimated to have died in Turkey as a result of political violence.

The Turkish military again became impatient with civil unrest spreading across the country. In September 1980, a pro-Islamist group led by Necmettin Erbakan staged a rally in the Anatolian city of Konya, demanding a return to Islamist *Seriat* law as a means to restore order. The Muslims reportedly showed disrespect to both the Turkish flag and the national anthem, and their gestures were regarded by the military as a challenge to its authority.

A few days later the Turkish military, led by General Kenan Evren, sent tanks rumbling through the streets of Ankara and Istanbul. General Evren announced that the army was taking over. The first order of business was to restore order. And once again, because of the chaotic political situation, much of the country welcomed the news.

The military arrested an estimated thirty thousand people; included among them were political militants, student and trade union activists, party leaders, and deputies. Both Süleyman Demirel and Bülent Ecevit went to jail, at least temporarily. Necmettin Erbakan, the Islamist leader, was convicted of election tampering and sentenced to two years in prison. The military abolished the National Assembly and disbanded all existing political parties.

It was the nation's third military coup since Atatürk had established the republic and set a path toward liberal democracy. Would it be the last?

CHAPTER

4

Into the Fray

During the anxious and unsettled 1970s, Tayyip Erdoğan took advantage of more lenient attitudes toward religion. Even at an early age, Erdoğan was headstrong and very sure of himself. One story about him tells of how, when he was in fifth grade, he attended a religion class. When asked to use a newspaper as a prayer rug, he refused. He thought it was wrong, and was not shy about telling his teacher.

This same teacher ended up taking an interest in Tayyip and eventually told the boy's father about an Islamist school in Istanbul, the state-run Prayer Leaders and Preachers School. It had a secular curriculum, but offered extra religious instruction. A number of young men who studied there went on to become Islamic clerics.

Tayyip Erdoğan was reportedly very good at reciting poetry, especially religious and nationalist verses. During poetry readings,

according to one childhood friend, Tayyip would hide a Turkish flag in his shirt. At just the right moment he would reach into his shirt and pull out the flag for dramatic effect.

Tayyip Erdoğan did well in school, and gained admission to Istanbul's Marmara University, a leading institution of higher learning specializing in economics and commerce. Erdoğan received a bachelor of arts degree in business management in 1981, although he had little exposure to international business. Unlike many of his fellow university students, he never learned a foreign language.

By the time Erdoğan arrived at the university, political activism had burst onto the campus scene, and as the 1970s rolled along the Turkish political situation became more volatile. The economy was faltering. Because Turkey produces only about ten percent of its own oil, the worldwide energy crisis of the early 1970s hit the country especially hard. Turkey suffered from both recession and inflation at the same time. It was hard for young people to find jobs, and even if they did, their paychecks did not go very far.

Students from many different political leanings, each for their own reasons, protested against the politicians and demonstrated against various governmental policies. There was only one thing they agreed on: They all hated the Americans. Meanwhile, divisions widened between the Kurds and the Turks, between the socialists and the conservatives, and between the urban professional secularists and the silent Muslim majority.

While in school Erdoğan was also a standout soccer player. He even participated in a professional league starting at age 15, playing for a team sponsored by the city's transportation authority. He was known for his speed and his stamina. He generally played with one eye looking into the stands for his father, who disapproved of the game. Soccer was once considered scandalous. One legend tells of Muhammad's grandchildren being beheaded, with their killers making a sport of kicking the heads around. Yet Erdoğan credits the sport with



Antiwar activists in Istanbul burn an American flag to protest a possible U.S.-led war against Iraq, in February 2003. At the time this photo was taken, Turkey's parliament was preparing to vote on a resolution to allow 62,000 U.S. troops to use the country as a launch pad for an assault on northern Iraq. Surveys showed that four out of five Turks were against involvement in the war.

teaching him the value of teamwork—something, he has said, that can be very useful in the game of politics.

It was in the early 1970s, when he was a teenager, that Erdoğan got involved in politics and joined Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist Party. In 1976, Erdoğan was elected chairman of the party's Beyoglu youth organization. Later that year he moved up to become leader of the citywide Istanbul youth organization. One story tells how young Erdoğan would go

down to the old wharfs in Istanbul and find an abandoned ship. He would face into the wind and practice the speeches he would later give to his youth group, beginning with, "My sacred brothers whose hearts beat with the excitement of a big future Islamic conquest. . . ."

While still in school, Erdoğan met a young woman who belonged to an Islamist women's group, the Idealist Ladies Association. She was attracted to his political flair and his fiery speaking, and they began a traditional chaperoned courtship. They were married in 1978.

With all his activities involving schoolwork, soccer, politics —and a love interest—Erdoğan did not graduate from the university until he was 27 years old. After the military coup of 1980, as Erdoğan was finally finishing up his studies, the military abolished all existing political parties, including the Islamist Party where Erdoğan worked. But in the tradition of modern Turkish politics, the founder of the Islamist Party, Necmettin Erbakan, soon established a new party, the Welfare Party—known in Turkish as the *Refah Partisi* (RP). It was based on similar principles and involved many of the same political operatives from the old Islamist Party, including both Tayyip Erdoğan and his wife, Emine.

After graduating, Erdoğan began working for Istanbul's transit authority. It was a government-owned enterprise, and Erdoğan remained active in politics. He even named his son after his political mentor, Necmettin Erbakan. While working for the transit authority, Tayyip Erdoğan had his first run-in with the established bureaucracy. His boss, a retired colonel, did not like Erdoğan's facial hair and ordered him to shave it off.

Political factions at the time dressed differently and even wore their hair differently. Liberal students typically had long hair and bushy moustaches—a style reminiscent of Stalin. Conservative students favored shorter hair and moustaches trimmed like the romantic image of the Asian horseman, with a long flowing drop at the ends. The pro-Islamists favored a

straight moustache. And anyone with a beard was suspected of being a fundamentalist Muslim opposed to the secular state.

Tayyip Erdoğan had a mustache and a small beard. He refused to shave them off. As a result, he was forced to quit his job. This incident led to more disillusionment with the authorities, and pushed Erdoğan further into the militant Islamic movement.

In 1984, Erdoğan was elected chairman of the Welfare Party's office in Beyoglu. The following year Necmettin Erbakan named 31-year-old Tayyip Erdoğan chairman of the Istanbul branch of the Welfare Party—and a member of the party's executive board.

The new chairman went to work developing and clarifying the organizational structure of the Istanbul branch of the Welfare Party, which became a model for other branches around the country. He reached out to the poor and disaffected in Istanbul's population, and with the help of his politically savvy wife, strengthened female participation in politics. His wife led the effort to organize women in the party. Together, the two of them were credited with attracting more and more women voters as each election came along.

The Welfare Party approached politics differently from traditional Turkish parties. Instead of dictating to the masses, as Atatürk and his successors in the Republican People's Party had done, the Welfare Party took popular feelings into account. The party built support from the grass roots level, paying attention to what the average voters wanted—not just what the elite party leaders *thought* they should want.

The party drew its support from a large group of Turks who were religiously inclined. Many of them resented the government bureaucracy that outlawed their practices, looked down on their beliefs, and was hostile to Islam in general—all in an effort to support the secular state that had been created by Atatürk half a century earlier. Indeed, to a large extent, the Welfare Party blamed Turkey's problems on elitist secular

leaders who had turned their backs on Islam. And the message was well-received, especially among Turkey's middle and lower classes. The Erdoğans built their organization, expanded their support, and as time went on, the Welfare Party began a serious and steady increase in its popularity and share of the vote.

Tayyip Erdoğan was one of a new generation of leaders who were educated but also religiously motivated. They were proud of their Muslim faith and felt that Islam offered answers to some of the economic and bureaucratic issues that had plagued Turkey for so long—and that secular leaders had failed to solve. Furthermore, by their own example of piety, prayer, and political activism, Welfare Party leaders hoped to spark a revival of Islamic influence in the country.

AFTER THE COUP

Meanwhile, in the Turkish capital of Ankara, the military regime reached into former Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's Justice Party and picked one of his economic advisers, a man named Turgut Özal, to serve as "minister of state." Özal already had a long career in business and government, and had spent several years studying and working in the United States.

Özal was a 1950 graduate of Istanbul's Technical University, where he had been among the early Islamist dissidents who met to pray in a janitor's closet. Although Özal himself was from an Anatolian village, the Technical University was a bastion of Turkey's elite, where the sons of rich Westernized Turks typically went to school. Turgut Özal was in the same class as Süleyman Demirel. He was two years behind Necmettin Erbakan, who used to join Özal in those prayer meetings.

In 1973, Özal's brother was elected to Turkey's parliament as a member of Erbakan's Islamist Party, and the next year Özal himself was appointed minister of agriculture by the coalition government of Ecevit and Erbakan. Later, in 1977, Özal was an Islamist candidate for the National Assembly from the city

of Izmir. He lost that election, but soon was appointed to Süleyman Demirel's government as an economics minister.

After the 1980 coup, Özal served in the military administration for two years, as the army worked to create yet another new constitution and reestablish democracy in the country. In July 1982 a new constitution was put to a vote, and it passed with a 90 percent majority. At the same time, General Kenan Evren was elected to a seven-year term as president of the country. The army was ready to hand Turkey back to the democratic system—but it wanted one of its own watching over things.

The generals had abolished all of the old political parties, as well as the National Assembly, but now in 1983 they made plans to elect a new Assembly. For that they needed some political parties. So two former generals stepped up, created their own political parties, and announced they were running for the new Assembly. Turgut Özal also got involved. He founded the Motherland Party, bringing together former members of Süleyman Demirel's old Justice Party as well as some Islamist friends of Necmettin Erbakan.

The Turks had been happy when the army took over to restore order to their embattled country. But now they were just as happy to see the military leave. The former generals failed to draw much support, and Turgut Özal's Motherland Party easily secured a victory. As head of the party with the most seats in the new National Assembly, Özal was charged with forming a new government, which, as prime minister, he did in December 1983.

The following year brought more elections to Turkey, for local government positions. By then Özal had some competition. Süleyman Demirel, who had been banned from politics by the army, worked behind the scenes to create a second middle-of-the-road organization, the True Path Party. Necmettin Erbakan had already founded his Welfare Party. Still, in the municipal election Özal's Motherland Party came out on top,

solidifying its hold on the Turkish government. The Welfare Party, starting small, received only 4.5 percent of the vote that year.

In Turkey, the 1980s belonged to Turgut Özal. His biggest challenge was to get the economy moving again, and he went at it with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. He reformed the tax system and encouraged foreign investment. He streamlined the notoriously inefficient Turkish bureaucracy and championed free trade with other countries. He persuaded European companies to come to Turkey and build modern factories, creating more jobs in the process. Soon Turkey was producing better goods at cheaper prices and exporting them around the Middle East and to Central Asia. Workers had money in their pockets, so they could afford to buy things. Shopping centers sprung up around Turkey. Foreign tourists discovered the country and they brought their money to the Aegean and Mediterranean resorts.

The government wasted less money propping up inefficient state businesses, so it could spend more on the country's infrastructure—roads and bridges, dams and telephone exchanges, and electric lines. Houses and apartment buildings went up at a blistering pace all around Istanbul and other major cities as people moved in from the countryside to take lucrative jobs. Istanbul even opened its own stock exchange in 1985, and soon stockbrokers with cell phones were dealing in stocks, bonds, and foreign currency.

There was a war going on at the time between Iraq and Iran, and Turkey took full advantage by selling goods and services to both sides. The oil situation turned around as well. Instead of being starved for oil, as the country had been in the 1970s, Turkey now had a pipeline to transport Iraqi oil to Mediterranean ports. Every gallon of oil that moved through Turkey brought a royalty check to the country.

In 1987 Turgut Özal applied for membership in the European Union, which would have brought additional economic benefits

to Turkey. Despite Turkey's economic advances, the application was stalled, put off, and ultimately denied. For, just as Turkey had a love-hate relationship with Europe, so too did Europe have its reservations about Turkey. Europeans were suspicious of the ups and downs of Turkish politics, punctuated by occasional military coups. They thought Turkey was too big and would wield too much influence in the European world. They also took a dim view of Turkey's record on human rights. They knew about the Armenians and the Kurds, and they had seen the popular 1978 movie *Midnight Express*, about a young American drug-runner who was victimized by a corrupt and sometimes sadistic Turkish justice system.

There was also constant opposition from Greece, always at odds with Turkey over Cyprus. Finally, there was one more issue: Europeans were Christians, Turks were Muslims. The Europeans were just not ready to make the Turks a part of their family.

Turgut Özal himself was a practicing Muslim. Much like Adnan Menderes in the 1950s, Özal allowed religion to creep back into Turkish society in the 1980s. He tried to attract the more religious Muslims into his own Motherland Party. And he saw in his friend Necmettin Erbakan and the Islamists, a counterweight to the radical liberals that had grown so strong in the 1970s. Prime Minister Özal tried to steer all that youthful energy away from the socialists, and channel it into more traditional Muslim activities.

So it was the leftist, more liberal publications—not the Islamic publications—that were banned in the 1980s. Özal's government supported the Muslims by expanding religious education, building new mosques, and allowing young men to openly study the Koran and make religion a part of their lives.

SOMEONE OLD, SOMEONE NEW

In 1987, the law banning political activity by former officials, such as veteran conservative Süleyman Demirel, was finally



Prime Minister Sulëyman Demirel faces up to an interview with *Time* magazine in January 1992. Demirel, a trained engineer who studied in the United States, entered politics in 1962 as a member of the Justice Party. During his political career, he became prime minister seven different times and served as president once (1993–2000). He served with the Justice Party, as head of two "Nationalistic Front" coalitions, and with the True Path Party.

repealed. Demirel, who had been prime minister at the time of the 1980 military coup, began making a comeback as head of the True Path Party. Although Demirel had once been Turgut Özal's mentor, now he was his rival. The emergence of this political threat helped persuade Özal to retire as prime minister.

Özal wanted to succeed General Evren as president. The more ceremonial job as president would relieve him of the day-to-day responsibilities of managing the government.

In 1989 President Evren's term expired. He stepped down, and Turgut Özal got the job. As president, however, Özal was required to withdraw from party politics. A man named Mesut Yilmaz followed him as party leader and prime minister. But without Özal, the Motherland Party lost its hold on the electorate.

In the 1991 election, it was the better-known Süleyman Demirel who came out on top. He did not have a clear majority, but his True Path Party managed to squeeze out the most votes. Demirel was able to build a coalition with other members of the Assembly, and eleven years after being thrown out of office by the 1980 military coup, he once again became Turkey's prime minister.

But his luck would not hold out indefinitely. The economic gains of the 1980s disappeared in the 1990s, due largely to the war in Iraq against Saddam Hussein. The Persian Gulf War brought an end to Turkey's profitable pipeline business. In addition, the United Nations coalition imposed an economic embargo on trade with Iraq, and Turkey lost that business as well.

Turgut Özal, now president, argued in favor of sending Turkish troops to take control over the Kurdish areas of Iraq and secure the oil fields in the northern part of the country. By the time U.S.-led coalition troops invaded Iraq from the south, some one hundred thousand Turkish soldiers were positioned along the Iraq border. But too many Turks saw only danger and death in joining the coalition against their neighbor. In the end, Turkey did not send troops into Iraq, but did allow U.S. war planes to use Turkish airfields for bombing runs against Saddam Hussein.

As soon as the war started, however, thousands of Iraqi Kurds fled the fighting and rushed over the Turkish border to

safety. The Turkish government, not prepared to help all these people, was overwhelmed. The influx of Kurds destabilized an area that was already home to many Kurdish dissidents. Eventually, American-led efforts to establish a no-fly zone in northern Iraq kept Saddam Hussein's military at bay, and most of the Iraqi Kurds returned to their own country—but not before upsetting both the economic and social fabric of the Kurdish areas of Turkey.

The Turkish economy, which had thrived in the 1980s, was once again in trouble. And the political situation, which had been stable under Turgut Özal, was about to enter another period of challenge and confusion. It began in 1993 when President Özal died suddenly at the age of 65.

Süleyman Demirel replaced Özal as president and Demirel's ruling True Path Party turned to political newcomer Tansu Çiller as its new leader. Çiller became Turkey's first woman prime minister. She had been a university professor who studied in America and who later, with the help of her banker husband, built a fortune in real estate. Demirel saw in her a fresh young face for his party when he chose her as his successor.

Atatürk had given women equal rights when the Republic was born. But in practice, the role of women had changed slowly in modern Turkey, especially in the rural Anatolian heartland. Most women were married at a young age, to a husband that met the approval of the family. Women stayed home; most of them did not work; they took care of the children and stayed out of sight.

But starting in the 1980s, women made great gains in the business world. In big cities such as Istanbul young women began to live modern Western-style lives. They resisted pressure to get married and have children, and instead went to school, got jobs, and lived on their own. Çiller has been compared to Margaret Thatcher, the strong, decisive, prime minister of England in the 1980s—a woman who made it on her own in a



Tansu Çiller, Turkey's first female prime minister, walks with U.S. President Bill Clinton, October, 1993. Çiller's short tenure was marred by the breakdown of a Kurdish ceasefire and its serious economic consequences. Çiller's government lost a vote of confidence, and the country held new national elections on December 24, 1995.

man's world. But while Çiller may have shared some of Thatcher's magnetism, she lacked Thatcher's political experience and base of political support.

Çiller pledged to bring a new approach to the Kurdish problem, and she toured Kurdish areas looking for compromises

that would satisfy all sides. But while promising "equal rights for all ethnic groups," she also allowed security forces a free hand in squashing the Kurdish rebellion. She made efforts to improve the economy, but the after-effects of the Persian Gulf War weighed too heavily.

Meantime, Necmettin Erbakan, Tayyip Erdoğan, and the Welfare Party were hard at work. In the 1989 municipal elections, the Welfare Party won 10 percent of the vote, compared with its 4.5 percent showing in 1984. That was good enough to get several Welfare Party candidates elected to local government positions. In 1991, during the post-Özal national election that sent Süleyman Demirel back to the position of prime minister, the Welfare Party increased its share of the vote to 17 percent. That brought the party 62 seats in the Turkey's National Assembly.

Then in March 1994, while Tansu Çiller struggled with the economy, the Kurds, and even her own party members, another round of municipal elections entered the political schedule. The Welfare Party fielded a strong slate of candidates throughout the country. Its greatest hope was in Istanbul, where young party leader Tayyip Erdoğan appeared on the ballot for mayor.

This was the first test for Tansu Çiller since she had come to power only the year before. Yes, her party had won the largest number of votes. But, all agreed, it had been a weak showing. Instead, it was the Welfare Party that made the news, winning 19 percent of the vote, only a few points behind the ruling True Path Party. More importantly, the Welfare Party won a majority in a number of cities around Turkey, including the two main prizes of Ankara and Istanbul.

There was now a bright, young, entirely new star on the Turkey political scene: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, mayor of Turkey's largest city.

CHAPTER

5

The Islamists Come of Age

Prime Minister Tansu Çiller simply did not carry the political weight to successfully challenge an entrenched political class that had run the country for 70 years. She was smart, tenacious, and media savvy. But after the poor showing of her True Path Party in the 1994 municipal elections, she went into the 1995 national elections with only moderate support from her own party and some backing from a few political newcomers.

In this regard, the Çiller government was no different from many of the weak coalition governments that had ruled Turkey since the 1960s. Numerous political parties splintered the vote, and no one—with the exception of Turgut Özal in the 1980s—could put together a real mandate to govern the country for very long. (To date, since its founding in 1923, there have been 59 different ruling governments in Turkey.)



Dilapidated buildings scar the Sultanbeyli neighborhood of Istanbul. With the industrial revolution, the gulf widened between the rich and the poor, who lived in poverty-stricken areas of the city such as these. As mayor of Istanbul, Recip Tayyip Erdoğan brought sanitation, transportation, and education to the poor of the city.

Complicating Çiller's position was a bad economy due in large part to fallout from the Persian Gulf War. Turkey was no longer taking in big fees for transporting Iraqi oil through its pipelines, and no longer reaping the rewards of what had been a brisk trade with Iraq and parts beyond.

Çiller had to impose an austerity program in Turkey, cutting back on public subsidies to businesses and on public services to voters. Then she had to go begging to the international banking community for loans and financial support. To add

insult to injury, Turkey's application to join the European Union, submitted by Turgut Özal in 1987, was still stalled, while newer applications from former communist Eastern European countries were fast-tracking through the system.

Many Turks resented this treatment from Europe. Even though only a small portion of Turkey was actually in Europe, most Turks, especially those in and around Istanbul, felt they were at least partly European. They thought they should be able to join the European Union if they wanted. Many felt the Europeans were discriminating against them because of their religion, their darker skin, and their location in the Middle East. They blamed their leader, Tansu Çiller, for this apparent European snub.

Resentment toward Europeans fed into the position of the Welfare Party in particular. The Islamists felt a strong kinship to their fellow Muslim countries. They were skeptical of Turkey's ties to Israel—even though those ties brought economic benefits to Turkey, including some three hundred thousand Israeli tourists every year. And the Islamists favored loosening Turkish ties to Europe. The Islamists certainly were not going to beg to be a part of the European Union, especially if they were not welcome. "We led the Islamic world for a thousand years," one veteran Welfare Party supporter proclaimed. "Turkey should resume the leadership of this world."

In an attempt to hold onto her power with increasingly disgruntled voters, Prime Minister Çiller granted more authority to the military. She gained stronger backing from powerful military interests. But the army, in turn, began to take some matters into their own hands, particularly when it came to the Kurds who were causing increasing amounts of unrest in their efforts to assert their rights.

The army attacked and destroyed in the southeast a number of Kurdish villages that were suspected of giving aid to the rebels. Kurdish activists, and even Kurdish politicians who were members of the National Assembly, were harassed by

the military. In 1994, while Çiller was prime minister, several Kurdish members of parliament were sentenced to prison terms for supporting activities against the state.

When Turks went back to the polls for a national election in December 1995, the competition was fierce. The biggest voting bloc, at roughly 40 percent of the electorate, was the center-right—a broad range of people who were basically in favor of Western ways, in favor of business, and in favor of Turkey's secular government. But this group was split between Tansu Çiller's True Path Party, and what remained of Turgut Özal's Motherland Party, led by Özal's successor.

Meanwhile, the Welfare Party continued to gain ground. Necmettin Erbakan, still the party leader, came up with the slogan, "Just Order." The electorate, recalling the violent chaos of the 1970s, and worried about radical activities from the Kurds, responded to the law-and-order message. Some also interpreted the slogan as calling for a return to strict Islamic *Seriat* law. At one point during the campaign, the Welfare Party newspaper even suggested the party might support the *Seriat* practice of cutting off the hands of convicted thieves.

Despite a few misgivings, growing numbers of Turks were ready for something new. They had voted for the Motherland Party, even after Turgut Özal left office, but the party had run out of ideas. Then voters turned to the True Path Party, first under veteran politician Süleyman Demirel and then under the fresh new female face of Tansu Çiller—and that had not worked out, either. So now many Turks were finally willing to give the Welfare Party a chance. Maybe the Welfare Party could get the economy moving again, keep the Kurds at bay, and deal with those snobby Europeans.

When the 1995 election returns came in, the results shocked the political establishment. A number of minor parties took their usual 2 and 3 percent of the vote. Then the tally was as follows: In third place: True Path Party, led by Tansu Çiller, at 19 percent; in second place: Motherland Party, led by

Mesut Yilmaz, at 19.5 percent; and in first place: the Welfare Party, led by Necmettin Erbakan, at 21.5 percent.

In response to the Welfare Party victory, the two center parties, the True Path and the Motherland, moved quickly to deny Necmettin Erbakan the seat as prime minister. The two parties formed a makeshift coalition and managed to stitch together a majority in parliament. Tansu Çiller agreed to resign as prime minister, and the head of the Motherland Party, Mesut Yilmaz, took the position.

However, the two parties soon began to argue and their agreement lasted only a few months. Yilmaz resigned, and Çiller formed a new coalition with the Welfare Party. This time Tansu Çiller agreed to serve as deputy prime minister and foreign minister. So in July 1996, after decades of playing second political fiddle, Necmettin Erbakan, at age 70, became the first pro-Islamist prime minister of Turkey.

Despite his earlier fiery rhetoric, Erbakan now sought to calm worries about his political goals. He promised to respect democracy and to work with the military. He proclaimed that he was prime minister to all Turks, regardless of their commitment to Islam. No mention was made of his earlier opposition to joining the European Union, his previous calls to abandon NATO, or his skepticism about cooperating with Israel.

But Necmettin Erbakan was still a committed Islamist who had taken over a secular government. He commanded the largest number of delegates in the National Assembly. His party ran the country's largest and most important cities. With Erbakan as prime minister, and Tayyip Erdoğan as mayor of Istanbul, Atatürk—the man who had created the modern secularist state of Turkey—must surely have been rolling over in his grave.

THE MAYOR OF ISTANBUL

The Welfare Party drew its strength from those dissatisfied with established political parties. Rural residents, who clung to

traditional Muslim customs and whose interests were long ignored by the educated class, were attracted to the party's populist line. Those who had fled the countryside and flocked to the cities in search of work and opportunities were particularly open to the Welfare Party message.

Many of these people arrived in Istanbul and other urban centers only to find minimum wage jobs, substandard housing, dirty streets, and limited educational opportunities for their children. But in Tayyip Erdoğan they found one of their own. Erdoğan's own father had left his small town on the Black Sea coast for the opportunities of Istanbul. And Tayyip Erdoğan himself had lived the hard life, growing up in the cluttered working-class streets of Istanbul's Beyoglu district.

The Welfare Party, instead of ruling from a position of educated privilege, also made an effort to reach out to the masses. For example, party regulars held "people's parliaments" where the citizens of Istanbul could come and air their grievances.

The party was well organized. Necmettin Erbakan ran a tightly controlled political machine. He was not one to tolerate dissent, and he found plenty of volunteers to run his disciplined party structure. In Tayyip Erdoğan's 1994 mayoral race, for example, some sixty-nine thousand women were organized in and around some six hundred Istanbul neighborhoods. Recognized by their headscarves and long Islamic coats, they contacted 2.6 million likely voters throughout the city. The party used modern polling techniques and on election day there were fleets of buses ready to transport voters to their polling places.

The Welfare Party's traditional attitudes toward women led many well-educated, urban, professional women to ignore it or oppose it. Tayyip Erdoğan seldom took his wife—who still today wears the religious headscarf—to official functions. He was not shy in advocating traditional Muslim family values, such as a high birth rate, and he suggested more than once that women should be content to find fulfillment in family life. If



Tayyip Erdoğan, poses outside the new offices of the political party Ak Partisi (AKP), or Party of Justice and Development in November 2001, in Ankara. After the Welfare Party and its sequel, the Virtue Party, were banned, and Necmettin Erbakan formed the Happiness Party, Erdoğan gathered the younger, more reform-minded members of the old Virtue Party and created the moderate Justice and Development Party. Erdoğan's popularity with the Turkish people led to the party's immediate rise to the top.

women had to work at all, he suggested, there was no better way than to volunteer for the Welfare Party.

Yet, particularly in the 1980s under Turgut Özal, many young, educated women in Istanbul and elsewhere started to make the choice to embrace a more traditional religious role. One example was found in a woman named Sibel Eraslan, head of the female wing of the Istanbul Welfare Party. She helped organize Erdoğan's election campaign. Eraslan had been expelled from law school for wearing a headscarf. Even after finishing her degree she was banned from appearing in court because of her Islamic headgear. She could only practice law in partnership with her husband, who would stand in for her in court.

Like many women dismissed from jobs or barred from universities because they wore a headscarf, Eraslan was attracted to the Welfare Party because she was rebelling against the strict secular code of the establishment. But also like many younger female party members, she was more liberal than the party elders. She worked in the slums of Istanbul teaching women and encouraging them to educate their daughters. Her politician of choice was not the old-school Necmettin Erbakan. It was instead the younger, more polished Tayyip Erdoğan.

When Tayyip Erdoğan won the election in Istanbul he proved that the Welfare Party was finally a force that could no longer be ignored. And in many ways he was a more attractive figure than his mentor, Necmettin Erbakan.

Erdoğan was not a flamboyant old-style wealthy aristocrat who had studied abroad. Instead, he cultivated his image as a man of the people, a true representative of average Turks. As mayor, Erdoğan proved to be an effective manager, as well. He became a tough mayor who could manage an unwieldy city. He would put criminals in jail, keep the streets clean, and make sure the garbage was collected.

Mayor Erdoğan went to work to make his city more livable. He improved city transportation, installed new water lines, and

planted trees to beautify the streets and the parks. He also opened up city hall to give the people better access to their government. He gave out his e-mail address. He held public gatherings in his office on Friday mornings, reminiscent of the party's "people's gatherings." He offered the citizens of Istanbul trays of tea while he listened to their concerns and complaints.

Erdoğan also developed a reputation as an ethical and evenhanded politician, running a relatively clean government. But he also pushed a nationalistic Islamist agenda. He banned alcohol from city buildings. He revived a plan to build a new mosque complex in the Beyoglu section of the city, although he later backed off in the face of opposition from the secularists. He had the curbs in no parking zones painted green and white—the colors of Islam.

As Erdoğan told one Western visitor: "Our view of religion is different from yours. According to your rules, religion only counts in the place where you pray. Our religion is a way of life. I have no time at all, not one minute, without Islam."

But, remembering that it was still against the law in Turkey for a political party to advocate for an Islamist state, Erdoğan always maintained that the Welfare Party was not a religious party. He simply said the mission of the party was justice, happiness, and prosperity.

However, Mayor Erdoğan did push through a revival of the anniversary of the 1453 conquest of Istanbul by Mehmet II the Conqueror. He made it a city holiday and a major event to be celebrated. He also began a policy of serving free hot meals after sundown during the month of Ramadan. Muslims fast from sunup to sundown during Ramadan, before typically enjoying a big meal after dark. But many people in Istanbul were either too poor to provide a good meal for themselves, or they worked too far away from home to get back to their families in time to enjoy the breaking of the fast. So in several locations around the city Erdoğan's political party supplied a meal, and some comfort, to practicing Muslims who had no place else to go.

Erdoğan, an effective manager and pragmatic politician, was also known for his fiery rhetoric—just as he had been in his younger days when he practiced his speeches on abandoned ships and pulled flags out of his shirt. At various times, he attacked both the United Nations and NATO, calling them puppets of the United States. He opposed the notion of Turkey joining the European Union. "The world's 1.5 billion Muslims are waiting for the Turkish people to rise up. We will rise up," he told his followers. "Democracy is a means to an end. We do not want to join the European Union, whose real name is the Catholic Christian States' Union."

He was a man of action, with his heart firmly rooted in his religion. "You cannot be secular and Muslim at the same time," he lectured supporters at a 1995 party rally. "With Allah's blessings, our rebellion will begin."

FORCED TO RESIGN

With Tayyip Erdoğan as mayor of Istanbul, and after Necmettin Erbakan stepped in as prime minister in 1996, the debate over the role of religion in Turkish politics intensified. Some people, looking over their shoulder at the Muslim fundamentalists who had taken over in neighboring Iran, worried that Turkey as they knew it would be destroyed. They wondered if these political newcomers really wanted to sever Turkey's ties with Europe and embrace instead the fundamentalist Muslims in the Middle East. Did they really want to bring back *Seriat* law, with its strict rules that applied to women? Once voted in, would they turn their backs on democracy?

At least once, during his campaign for prime minister, Erbakan had praised the Iranian government for resisting Western influence. He offered a vision of an Islamic alternative to the West—with an Islamic equivalent of NATO, a Muslim United Nations, and in answer to the European community, a Middle Eastern Union with a common Islamic currency.

Yet, others felt that handing over the reins to the Welfare Party was merely a sign of a healthy democracy. If democracy in Turkey could not cope with the election of an Islamist government, then was it really a democracy at all?

Still, Erbakan's Welfare Party threatened to step back from the secularist path pioneered by Atatürk and adhered to by subsequent leaders: Ismet Inönü in the 1940s; Celal Bayer and Adnan Menderes in the 1950s; Süleyman Demirel and Bülent Ecevit in the 1960s and 1970s; and Turgut Özal in the 1980s.

And Turkey's prime ministers were not the only ones committed to a secular nation. Most Turkish citizens fully backed the secular government, especially the growing class of increasingly influential urban professionals. The entire ruling class had been schooled in Atatürk's secular legacy. Leading the way, of course, was the military, which had staged three military coups—in 1960, 1971, and 1980—to maintain Atatürk's vision of a modern secular democracy.

When Erbakan became prime minister he immediately began to recruit Muslim activists into government positions. He gave them jobs throughout the bureaucracy and even in the military. Soon after his election, Erbakan demonstrated his solidarity with the Muslim world by making a number of visits to Islamic countries. He went to Iran and signed an agreement with the fundamentalist ayatollahs to build a natural gas pipeline. He flew to Libya and met with radical colonel Muammar Qaddafi. Meanwhile, Erbakan did little to improve the Turkish economy. The budget deficit remained swollen; inflation stayed high; unemployment ran rampant; and corruption was left to flourish.

In February 1997, less than a year after Erbakan gained power, an incident occurred that crystallized political views. The Welfare Party mayor of the bustling town of Sincan, near Ankara, held a rally in honor of "Jerusalem Day," a holiday first declared in Iran in 1980 by the radical cleric Ayatollah Khomeini. The main themes behind the holiday were the annihilation

of Israel, increasing aid for the violent Palestinian armed insurrection, total rejection of any political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and provoking hatred for the United States. The town of Sincan was a Welfare Party stronghold that had grown up since the early 1990s with a huge influx of Turks from rural areas.

The Iranian ambassador traveled to Sincan to attend the rally. The crowd chanted anti-Israeli slogans, and held signs in support of Islamic groups. The ambassador gave a fiery speech that praised the religious government in Iran and called for the imposition of S*eriat* law in Turkey. "Do not be afraid to call yourselves fundamentalists," he said. "Fundamentalists are those who follow the words and actions of the Prophet. God has promised them the final victory."

The scene caused a scandal in government circles, and the Iranian ambassador was expelled from the country. Then the Turkish military reacted. First, tanks were sent into Sincan in a show of force. Then an investigation of the Welfare Party was initiated. The military also released a blistering statement saying that "destructive and separatist groups are seeking to weaken our democracy and legal system by blurring the distinction between the secular and the anti-secular."

Soon Turks were fearing yet another military coup. Instead, military commanders came up with a plan they called the "February 28th Process." They went to Erbakan and pressured him to sign a list of action points designed to reduce the influence of fundamentalism in Turkey. Certain extreme Muslim sects would be banned. The Welfare Party would be prohibited from recruiting more Muslims into the government. Religious schools would be restricted. Politically symbolic dress, such as women's headscarves, would be banned from public display.

Prime Minister Erbakan signed the document, but the military and its secularist supporters were still not satisfied. They launched a campaign against Erbakan designed to force him out of office. Just a few months later, in June 1997, Necmettin

Erbakan bowed to pressure and resigned. The government again turned back to Mesut Yilmaz of the Motherland Party to form a new coalition government.

In January 1998 the Turkish courts decided to shut down the Welfare Party, citing "evidence confirming its actions against the principles of the secular republic." Police raided party headquarters and seized computers, party records, and other materials. The Welfare Party bank account was frozen, and its Internet site was shut down. Several Welfare Party officials were arrested—along with other people who were considered a danger to the state, such as a number of politically active Kurds.

The military, with full support of the Turkish courts as well as a good portion of the government bureaucracy, continued its campaign against Islamist officials and their friends, including a number of businessmen who, prosecutors claimed, were laundering money for Islamic groups. More people were arrested; more went to jail.

Several Welfare Party mayors were subjected to investigations into their activities, including the mayor of Ankara. The mayor of Sincan, who had allowed the offending political rally in the first place, was convicted and sentenced to a possible prison term for "inciting religious hatred."

Then the courts went after Tayyip Erdoğan. Prosecutors filed similar charges against him for a speech he had made the previous year that they said called for violent overthrow of the government. In April 1998 he was convicted in the Turkish federal court. The decision would not only cost him his job, but also a possible ten-month prison term. What was Erdoğan's offense? At a rally he had read the following poem that used Islam as a metaphor for militancy:

The mosques are our barracks

The domes our helmets

The minarets our bayonets

And the faithful our soldiers

The poem, by Zyia Gokalp, was originally written to inspire Atatürk's freedom fighters. It is taught in Turkey's schools. But this was judged to be a call by Erdoğan to begin a holy war.

In his defense, Erdoğan said the words were not his. He was merely quoting from a Turkish folk poem. The words were not meant to incite violence, nor were they directed at any particular target. Instead, he claimed, he meant the words as a call for peace. He also complained that the process removing him from office was not democratic. "In a democracy only the people can put you in power," he said, "and only the people should be able to remove you."

The conviction of Tayyip Erdoğan brought protests from the United States and European countries, which were already skeptical of Turkey's human rights record and the methods used by the police. The conviction also brought some five thousand demonstrators to Istanbul's city hall in a rally to show support for their mayor.

Nonetheless, after serving as mayor of Istanbul for over four years, Erdoğan was about to lose his job. The court also ruled that he could no longer take part in Turkey's political activities. And he faced a possible ten months in prison.

CHAPTER

6

Path to Power

After he was forced to resign, and his party was banned, Necmettin Erbakan urged the more than 4 million Welfare Party followers to stay calm, not to respond with violence. He announced that he supported the new coalition government led by Mesut Yilmaz. Tayyip Erdoğan, who was allowed to stay in office pending an appeal, seconded the motion, saying, "They have never seen us involved with guns, and they never will."

Although Welfare Party supporters wanted to avoid any further disciplinary action by the military, or the new coalition government, they were nevertheless confident of their role in the future. One younger Welfare Party leader said, "We are only human. We made mistakes. But everything will start again. Even if they shut us down 40 times, we will open 41 times. We are the future."

Yet there were people in Turkey who were glad that Erbakan was gone and that the Welfare Party had been banned. Many Turkish citizens worried that the overtly religious politicians were extremists who were biding their time until they could establish an Islamist theocracy—a country run by religious law rather than democratic law.

Women who did not wear a headscarf looked at women who did and wondered, if we *allow them* to wear a headscarf, how long will it be before they *force us* to wear a headscarf? And the traditional restrictions on women would not necessarily stop there. If the Islamists took over, would they force women out of the workplace and require them to stay at home? Would the Islamists return to the Muslim tradition of polygamy? This was not completely implausible. It had all happened in neighboring Iran.

One man, a waiter in a restaurant, was not shy about offering his opinion. "I'm glad the Welfare Party has been closed," he said. "They were narrow-minded, mixing up politics and religion." But then he went on to say he would support Tayyip Erdoğan if he emerged as the leader of a new Islamist party. "He is modern and progressive. I'd vote for him."

And soon the pro-Islamic politicians were indeed forming a new party out of the old. This time the activists did not turn to Necmettin Erbakan, now 71 years old, but to the younger Tayyip Erdoğan, who they regarded as the future of the Islamist movement in Turkey.

The new group was called the Virtue Party, and more than 100 of the 150 former Welfare Party National Assembly members quickly joined up. "Nothing will be the same from now on," proclaimed Tayyip Erdoğan, outlining his mission. "If things remain the same, we will not achieve the results we seek. If we want to attract more than 40 percent of the vote and come to power, we need a new image." That image would show moderation in all things, sympathy toward human rights, and cooperation with other political parties. Erdoğan forged a

broader base of support, less overtly religious than the old Welfare Party. The Virtue Party would also welcome women into high party positions and allow them to seek public office. Three women joined the thirty-member leadership group.

Yet, rather than taking comfort in Erdoğan's new-found moderation, Turkey's military officials viewed it as a threat. They worried that Erdoğan's less rigid brand of Islam would prove more appealing than the old politics of Necmettin Erbakan. They were afraid it would attract more voters, particularly bolstering support for the Islamists among the growing ranks of young, educated, urban professionals. And they were right. Almost immediately, according to 1998 polls, the Virtue Party enjoyed the support of some 20 to 25 percent of the electorate.

In September 1998 the Turkish courts upheld the conviction of the Istanbul mayor. Again, Erdoğan pleaded for peaceful protest among his supporters, while vowing to fight for his career. Some ten thousand people cheered him outside Istanbul's city hall, chanting the very words that brought the trouble to Erdoğan's door: "The mosques are our barracks, the minarets are our spears. . . ." Supporters raised posters and banners in support of their mayor. One said, "Poetry Reading Man You Deserve a Medal." Another proclaimed, "This Song Is Not Over Yet."

After Erdoğan finally cleared out his office and left city hall, at the end of 1998, he toured the country, speaking before various crowds, defending his actions but urging supporters not to resort to violence in their protests. In March 1999, Erdoğan appeared at the prison to serve his sentence, backed by throngs of protesting supporters. He served four months of his ten-month sentence, while on the outside, politics swirled around him.

The new prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, pressed ahead with military-supported restrictions on religious schools. He instructed the bureaucracy to enforce the ban against women

wearing headscarves in public schools and other public buildings. He stopped Islamist businessmen from providing financial support to Muslim political interests.

But Prime Minister Yilmaz was not popular among the Turkish electorate. His actions were not well received. When he was later implicated in some vague charges of government corruption, nobody came to his defense. Soon he was gone.

The political parties in the National Assembly went to work to form yet another new coalition. This time they turned to Bülent Ecevit, aging leftist politician from the 1970s, who took over as prime minister in the early days of 1999. He soon faced a familiar problem in the form of a crippled economy that was going from bad to worse. The country carried a heavy load of debt, the inflation rate was high, and the value of Turkish currency was plummeting. Labor unions were unhappy and threatening strikes. And Ecevit had neither the energy nor the political clout to deal with all of these issues.

As the world economic boom of the 1990s began to fall apart, things only got worse for Turkey. The stock market plunged. Economic activity declined. Companies went out of business. Hundreds of thousands of Turks lost their jobs.

The Ecevit government applied for more loans from international banks, and secured economic help from the European Union. But in putting through an economic austerity program to try to spur the economy, Ecevit lost what little support he had, sending his already low level of popularity even lower.

Meanwhile, Tayyip Erdoğan got out of prison. He had no job, no political party, and no standing in government. But, according to journalist Rusen Cakir, a follower of Erdoğan's career, Erdoğan left prison a changed man. "For 15 years he was an Islamist and he was following Erbakan. He wanted to be the second Erbakan." But prison gave Erdoğan a heavy dose of reality. "He realized that there was no way out, that he had to give up Islamism. He didn't choose to be a democrat—he had no alternative."



Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, flanked by Turkish honor guard officers, attends a wreath-laying ceremony in the mausoleum of Atatürk, on August 1, 2000, in Ankara. Erdoğan and his new political party posed a serious threat to Ecevit, who worked with the courts to try to stop Erdoğan from assuming the leadership of the AKP. Ecevit's health declined in the spring of 2002, however, and national elections were moved up to November 2002.

In June 2001 the Turkish courts ruled that the Virtue Party was in effect the same as the old Welfare Party and therefore should be subject to the same sanctions. So the courts abolished the Virtue Party, as they had previously banned the Welfare Party, for being a center of non-secular activities.

A month later, however, the courts also produced a general political amnesty. The amnesty applied, at least in part, to Tayyip Erdoğan. He was once again allowed to participate in politics, although he still could not run for office.

After the Virtue Party was banned, a group of older, more conservative Islamists, led by Necmettin Erbakan, founded a new party called the Happiness Party. But Erdoğan was not interested. He wanted to get back into the political mainstream. In August 2001 he gathered the younger, more reform-minded members of the old Virtue Party and created the Justice and Development Party—known in Turkish as the *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*, or AKP. Its very name refers to a "white" party, which in Turkey traditionally suggests a more liberal, tolerant wing of the religion.

Erdoğan's popularity, enhanced by his months in prison and his absence from the political scene as the economy went downhill, helped the AKP almost immediately become the main opposition to Bülent Ecevit's government. Polls showed that Tayyip Erdoğan was the most popular politician in Turkey, far outshining Ecevit in the public's imagination.

Erdoğan went forward with his plans to cast himself as a moderate. He claimed his new party's primary goals were improving the economy and expanding democracy. He suggested that now he thought it might be a good idea for Turkey to join the European Union, after all. When challenged about some of his earlier more radical statements as mayor of Istanbul, Erdoğan simply replied, "The world has changed and so have I."

After September 11, 2001, he condemned the terrorist attacks on the United States. "We never supported the Taliban

rule," he said. "They represent blood and death." Erdoğan announced that he supported a request by the United States to use Turkish air bases to help hunt down Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

Though still openly calling himself a devout Muslim, Erdoğan no longer argued that Turkey should become a Muslim state. Instead, he said that religion was a personal matter, separate from politics. He compared himself to President George W. Bush of the United States, an avowed Christian. Just as President Bush could practice his religion and lead a secular nation such as the United States, so Tayyip Erdoğan could call himself a devout Muslim and be trusted in Turkey's secular politics. "Turkey should become a model for the Muslim world in terms of science, lifestyle, international relations and economics," he said from the sleek new headquarters of the AKP located in Ankara.

"The party will attract the mainstream of the country," boasted Abdullah Gül, a friend to Tayyip Erdoğan and one of the party's organizers. "Some of us are religiously oriented individuals, but we don't want to be called a religious party."

And yet, even as Erdoğan backed off his Islamic roots, even as he became more and more popular in the polls, the political establishment remained skeptical, even hostile. The military, still viewing itself as the defender of Atatürk's secular government, simply did not believe in Erdoğan's conversion to moderation. The three political parties that made up the ruling coalition saw Erdoğan as a threat to their power. They were not inclined to help him establish himself or his new party.

In early 2002, Turkey's courts again ruled that Erdoğan's 1998 conviction for seditious behavior meant he could not serve as the head of a political party. He had to step down as leader of the AKP. The court also reaffirmed the decision prohibiting Erdoğan from running for a seat in the National Assembly. That foreclosed any possibility that Erdoğan could

become prime minister, because only a member of the National Assembly is eligible to take that position.

In the spring of 2002 the aging prime minister, Bülent Ecevit, began to experience health problems. He was increasingly unable to deal with the political and economic aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks. The Turkish economy was still in decline. More and more Turks were out of work. Dissatisfaction spread from the streets to the political precincts and finally to the National Assembly itself. Several ministers resigned from Ecevit's government, until the deputy prime minister, Ecevit's own chief aide, offered his resignation as well.

The National Assembly finally acted, passing a major financial reform package that included provisions recommended by the European Union for possible future membership. A series of bills abolished the death penalty and guaranteed free speech to all, including Kurds who wanted to teach school and broadcast on television and radio in their own language. The Assembly also listened to calls for early elections from various members of the government. Ecevit's term of office officially ran until 2004. But the National Assembly voted to move up the election to November 2002.

THE 2002 CAMPAIGN

In an attempt to impress the Turkish electorate and retain power, ministers from the ruling coalition tried to form their own political party. A respected economics minister, Kemal Dervis, stepped forward as a candidate vowing to "establish a convergence of center-left forces that would achieve the conditions under which Turkey can overcome its economic difficulties and pursue our road towards Europe and a modern and free society."

But political surveys showed that some 60 percent of Turkey's voters were dissatisfied with the state of democracy in their country. Support for the AKP was running about 25 percent—far below a majority, but also way ahead of any

other political group. As one pro-Islamist party chief in Istanbul said, "We are crying out for change. The whole country wants a fresh start, and we believe we can give it to them."

As the election campaign geared up, all eyes turned to Tayyip Erdoğan and the AKP. Was Erdoğan's new party, which was running twice as strong as any of its competitors, really going to win? If so, would Tayyip Erdoğan be allowed to lead his own organization? Would he somehow figure out a way to become prime minister?

And if the AKP won, would party leaders be true to their new commitment to democracy and secularism and push to clean up the government, fix the economy, and provide a vision for the future? Or, as some worried, would the Islamists finally show their true stripes and call for a return to *Seriat* law with its suppression of women's rights and religious freedom?

Bülent Ecevit, the outgoing prime minister, voiced the opinion that an AKP victory would bring a crisis in Turkey. "Mr. Erdoğan says he has changed and some newspaper columnists clap. But how can this be proved?" Ecevit challenged both politicians and the media to expose the "true face" of the AKP.

Erdoğan's enemies launched new investigations into his past in an effort to discredit him. Tape recordings from 1992 of Erdoğan criticizing the military for its activist role in Turkey's political system, and also praising the idea of Islamic *Seriat* law were made public. The military opened an investigation into possible corruption in Erdoğan's administration while he was mayor of Istanbul. The army charged that Erdoğan fixed city contracts and also diverted funds into his own account. Most voters dismissed these allegations, however, recalling Erdoğan's reputation for clean government. They saw the charges as an obvious ploy by the military to taint Erdoğan's character during the election.

Erdoğan's strategy was not to attack his opponents, but to reassure them. He did not deny the extreme views of his younger days. He simply took a position that stated, "That was

then; this is now." For example, he told voters: "We were anti-European. Now we a pro-European. As for mixing religion and politics, Islam is a religion, democracy is a way of ruling. You can't compare the two. We just want to increase the happiness of the people."

Erdoğan's chief deputy, Abdullah Gül, the man most likely to become prime minister if Erdoğan could not serve, sounded the same refrain, saying, "We believe that being a religious party is not rational and not good, and doesn't help anyone. If you ask me individually, I try to be a good Muslim, and I want my family and children to follow that way. But I don't want to interfere in public life." While he campaigned, Gül made a point of showing he was a part of the secular world by publicly shaking hands with women voters and meeting with people in bars—things a strict Muslim would not do.

In the process, the AKP lost some support from older conservative Islamists who turned to the fundamentalist Happiness Party. But the new image of the AKP brought younger and more educated people into the party, more than making up for any defectors. Party leaders emphasized that they wanted to create a new kind of democratic Muslim government, something like an Islamic version of the Christian Democrats in Europe. AKP leaders were open, honest, and even proud of their religious backgrounds. But there would be nothing specifically religious about their policies or positions. "We want to prove that a Muslim country could be democratic, transparent and compatible with the modern world," said Abdullah Gül when he went to Brussels to meet with European leaders.

Meanwhile, Tayyip Erdoğan continued to maintain that his popularity rested not on his religion, but on his track record in government service. Everyone agreed he had done a good job as Istanbul's mayor. And, having been in prison, he was able to run as an "outsider" to the hated political establishment in Ankara.

Erdoğan reiterated the fact that he was no longer interested in mixing religion and politics. He told everyone that he was now in favor of keeping close ties with Europe and the United States. He said he would defer to the judgment of the military if Turkey were to be asked to take part in a coalition against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. He insisted his concerns were fighting corruption, healing Turkey's ailing economy, helping the country enter the European Union, and protecting the rights of all Turkish citizens. He was in favor of the little guy. And he continued to cultivate his image as the clean, conservative alternative to the usual Ankara politicians.

Erdoğan and the AKP were also good organizers and good political campaigners. The AKP in Istanbul ran employment agencies to help people find jobs. The party also maintained an office designed to help people who had complaints about local government services. It sponsored programs for the disabled and organized sports games for children. The AKP even distributed free soccer balls to kids in the parks on weekends.

The world was watching the 2002 elections in Turkey. American President George Bush was gearing up to wage a war against Iraq. Both the Americans and the Europeans, even those who opposed the threatened Iraq war, were taking pains to point out to the world community that the international campaign against terrorism was not a war against Muslims. It was, instead, a war against senseless violence and murder. They saw, in Turkey, an example of how a Muslim country could coexist with a secular democracy and thereby provide an example for other Muslim governments.

In September 2002 the Turkish election board met and again confirmed that Erdoğan was ineligible to run for parliament—along with a few others such as Necmettin Erbakan and a pro-Kurdish candidate. But Erdoğan continued to campaign. About the election board decision, he told a crowd in Ankara: "The public consciousness is heavily wounded. However, nobody should get upset, for this wound will surely be healed."

Erdoğan skirted the issue of his position in the party by claiming he was only a party spokesman. But he also said he would appeal the ban against his participation in politics to the courts of the European Union. And he vowed to keep campaigning. His picture appeared on buses and posters. His name would also appear on the ballot, underneath the AKP designation.

The fight between Erdoğan and election officials only made the party "spokesman" more popular. Erdoğan benefited from his new underdog status. The voters felt the political establishment was being unfair. "I wouldn't have voted for him," said one Istanbul voter. "But I would not ban him. Only by seeing him in office would we know what he truly stands for."

Ten days before the election the chief prosecutor went to court to try to ban the AKP entirely, charging that by allowing Erdoğan to remain as the acting head of the party it was defying the court's previous decision. However, no decision was expected before the election.

Outgoing prime minister Bülent Ecevit continued to charge that Erdoğan was hiding a secret Islamist agenda. However, the louder his opponents shouted against him, the more Erdoğan and the AKP rose in political surveys. With the election only days away, polls predicted a 30 percent return for the AKP, and barely 20 percent for its nearest rival, the old Republican People's Party led by Kemal Dervis, who was trying to rally all those still in fear of the Islamists.

Erdoğan continued to reassure ever-larger crowds that he was *not* Islamist. He was instead focused on reviving the economy, putting people back to work, and listening to the concerns of ordinary Turks. He appealed to voters not on the basis of their religion, but on their anger over Turkey's growing national debt, its high inflation rate, and a 20 percent unemployment rate.

As people went to the polls on that November day, they were still unsure what role Erdoğan could play in the new government. He was barred from holding public office. But



Justice and Development Party leader Tayyip Erdoğan appeared at a press conference on November 3, 2002, just after his party emerged victorious in the parliamentary polls. Because of his recent imprisonment for "seditious behavior," however, Erdoğan was essentially forbidden by law to hold the position of prime minister, usually given to the leader of the victorious party.

AKP members had raised the possibility of amending the law once they took power. As for Erdoğan, he did not say who he supported to become the next prime minister.

At the end of the day, when all the votes had been counted, the AKP came in with 34 percent of the total. In second place was the Republican People's Party, at 19 percent. There were sixteen other parties offering representatives for parliament. Necmettin Erbakan's Happiness Party, the conservative Islamist group, brought in only 2 percent of the votes. The party of the

incumbent prime minister, Bülent Ecevit, could not even manage that much. In fact, no other party won the minimum 10 percent to be eligible to send representatives to the National Assembly. At final count, the AKP had 363 representatives in the 550-seat Assembly. It was the first time any party had a clear majority in the National Assembly in over a decade.

Erdoğan was the party member who accepted the victory. He sought to calm jittery nerves of secularists both at home and abroad. "We are going to push hard for membership in the European Union, and we don't plan to disturb anyone's way of life," he said. "We are determined to carry on with international economic and defense institutions."

He went on to tell his fellow citizens that he would "work for all our people . . . to find solutions to the problems of freedom of speech, the problems of human rights, and the problems of freedom of belief."

CHAPTER

7

The New Prime Minister

Many questions remained about the Justice and Development Party, but one thing was clear. With a majority in parliament, the AKP did not have to make compromises by forming a coalition with another party in order to establish a government.

Still, AKP leaders reassured people throughout Turkey and the West that nothing would change. A few days after the election, at the start of Ramadan—the holy month when devout Muslims fast during daylight hours—the AKP kept its cafeteria open during the day. It was a symbolic gesture designed to show that the party would not rule the country by Islamic law.

No one knew who the new prime minister would be. But everyone presumed that regardless of who it was, Tayyip Erdoğan would be calling the shots from behind the scenes. Meanwhile, all the old names from Turkish politics were leaving the scene. Bülent

Ecevit retired from politics. Tansu Çiller resigned as head of the True Path Party. Mesut Yilmaz gave up his position as leader of the Motherland Party. Out went the old and in came the new—including 26 women who were elected to parliament, 14 of them as members of the Justice and Development Party.

The military had no immediate comment on the election returns. But it soon bowed to the inevitable and said it would support the democratically elected government. Military officials did warn, however, that they would be watching for threats to the Turkish way of life, and were ready to protect the nation from extremists.

Although the military was relatively quiet, Turkish financial markets gave the AKP a loud vote of confidence. The value of Turkish currency went up by 4 percent; international agencies raised ratings on the country's debt; and Turkey's stock market jumped 35 percent in the four days following the election. In a nod to the business community, one of Erdoğan's first actions was to announce a program to help small businesses in Turkey by offering government loans, lowering their taxes, and reducing prices for government-supplied water and electricity.

Within a week of the election, and still with no candidate for prime minister, Erdoğan suggested there was a way to amend the constitution so he could take the position. "Certain anti-democratic situations will be remedied," he told reporters. "It is the duty of the political establishment to overcome a problem that contradicts the national will." A nationwide poll indicated that some 70 percent of Turks wanted Erdoğan to become prime minister.

Meantime, Erdoğan *acted* like the prime minister, giving interviews, consulting with other Turkish leaders, and making a trip through southern Europe. In Greece, Erdoğan met with the prime minister to discuss the divided island of Cyprus. He also made a plea to secure Greek support for Turkey's entrance into the European Union.

Two weeks after the election, Tayyip Erdoğan nominated his deputy, Abdullah Gül, to the position of prime minister. As prescribed by Turkish law, the nomination went to the president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a former judge who had succeeded Süleyman Demirel in 2000. As recommended, Sezer made the appointment.

Yet upon taking office Gül said, "It is our absolute duty to normalize this abnormal situation," indicating that he would begin the necessary moves to pave the way for Erdoğan to become prime minister. Even as the president was announcing Gül's appointment, Erdoğan was publicly outlining the AKP legislative agenda, leaving no doubt who was really in charge.

Erdoğan pronounced boldly, "From now on, nothing will be the same in Turkey." He vowed to take action against corruption and make the government more open and transparent. He said he would sell off state-owned businesses to the private sector in an attempt to improve the economy. He reiterated his interest in pushing Turkey's bid to join the European Union. Member countries were scheduled to meet in December to discuss future memberships. As part of his European Union plan, he promised to resolve the long-running dispute with Greece over the island of Cyprus. He vowed to end the use of torture by Turkey's police, a practice that had been legally banned but was still tolerated by authorities. He repeated that he would defer to the Turkish military in deciding what to do about the impending war against Saddam Hussein.

Finally, Erdoğan skirted the hot-button issue of headscarves. His own wife, and Abdullah Gül's wife too, both wore headscarves. The two of them avoided controversy by not accompanying their husbands on official business, because they were not allowed to wear their headscarves in the very public buildings where their husbands worked.

Adding some personal poignancy to that issue, the Erdoğans had four children, two daughters and two sons. Their two daughters could not attend a public school in Turkey



Tayyip Erdoğan and his wife Emine, appear with their daughter Esra and her groom Berat Albayrak on their wedding day, July 11, 2004. Guests included Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf (right) and King Abdullah II of Jordan (second from right). Headscarves worn by Muslim women, and by Esra and Emine in this photo, which are banned in schools and government buildings, are the source of much controversy in Turkey.

while wearing this religious symbol. So the Erdoğans sent their daughters to Indiana University in the United States where they were free to practice their religion and wear headscarves. (The Erdoğans also had a son studying in the United States, at Harvard University.)

Erdoğan pledged support for both free expression of religion and for universal access to public education. In other words, he was against the ban on headscarves. However, he insisted he would run a secular administration, and would not force religious values on anyone. He said he would wait for a national consensus to develop on the issue. Meanwhile, the public was

going his way. A poll found that more than 70 percent of Turks thought that women should be allowed to wear a headscarf to work in a government office or to a public school.

Then Erdoğan embarked on a trip through Europe. He visited member states of the European Union, stressing his own moderate views as well as the benefits to Europe of endorsing a liberal democratic state in Turkey. He still faced ambivalence on the continent, however. In opposing Turkey, critics cited human rights abuses especially toward the Kurds, a lack of stability in the Turkish government, the continued interference from the military, and the lack of economic progress. One concern that critics usually did not cite was the issue of race and religion. Turkey is a Muslim country, with darker-skinned people, while Europe is a predominately white, Christian continent.

But Erdoğan needed Europe to help Turkey climb out of its worst economic slump since World War II. He needed foreign investments from European countries; he needed loans; he needed Europe to become a market for Turkish goods.

He told European leaders that admitting Turkey to the European Union would help him push through the very economic and democratic reforms that Europeans wanted. It would also send a positive message to other Muslim countries that Muslims and Europeans could indeed live and work together.

Then he laid down a challenge, saying, "Turkey has been waiting at the gates of the European Union for 40 years. But countries that applied only 10 years ago are almost becoming members. We think we have to go beyond that and not look at the EU as a Christian club." He urged European leaders to give Turkey a definite date when the country could at least begin accession talks—the talks that would begin the official process of joining the European Union. "If the results are negative, it will create the provocative thought of the EU as a club of Christian countries."

ACTING HEAD OF STATE

After his journey through Europe, Erdoğan received an invitation from President Bush to visit Washington, D.C., a sure sign that the United States and the international community recognized Erdoğan as the true leader of Turkey. But President Bush wanted something. At the time, the U.S. government was planning to go to war against Iraq. The American military needed airbases in the region to service its warplanes. America was also considering stationing its troops in Turkey. It could then launch an attack into Iraq from the north, to supplement the main attack which would come from Kuwait and the Persian Gulf in the south.

Erdoğan knew that allowing American troops on Turkish soil would not be a popular decision in his country. Polls in Turkey showed that over 80 percent of the people opposed having anything to do with military action against Iraq. Aside from the issue of joining an attack against a fellow Muslim country, Turks remembered the disaster that followed the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Thousands of Iraqi Kurds sought refuge in southeastern Turkey, causing social upheaval and costing a great deal of money to support relief efforts. There were also the economic problems that followed the embargo against Iraq. Jobs were lost as truck routes were closed and oil pipelines shut down. Also, Turkey had developed a substantial tourist industry, especially along the Turkish Riviera. "But who," as one Turk asked, "wants to go on vacation in a war zone?"

Erdoğan spent December 10, 2002, in Washington, D.C., talking with President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice. Bush agreed to lobby Europeans on behalf of Turkey's effort to join the European Union. He would argue that accepting Turkey would support the development of democracy in a strategically important nation, and also serve as a model for other Muslim states in the Middle East, including a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. In addition, President Bush reportedly offered Turkey



A Turkish soldier guards U.S. military equipment March 17, 2003, in the port city of Iskenderun, Turkey. Prime Minister Erdoğan had recently dashed any remaining U.S. hopes of a decision to allow deployment of troops in Turkey for an Iraq war when he said his government wouldn't consider doing so until a vote of confidence could be won on the issue. In return, the United States withdrew its offer to provide a multibillion-dollar aid package vital to shielding Turkey against the economic impact of war.

$5 billion in aid to compensate for the economic burden of a war in Iraq.

In return, the Turks would allow U.S. troops to use their country as a staging ground for invading Iraq. The United States also supported a resolution to the Cyprus issue. As further enticement for Europe to accept Turkey into the European Union, Erdoğan would persuade the Turkish inhabitants of Cyprus to sign a peace proposal offered by the United Nations to end decades of strife on the island.

Bush's support for Turkey's entrance into the European Union soon became a moot point, however. On the very day that Erdoğan was in Washington, the Union accepted a French-German proposal to delay negotiations with Turkey over admittance to the Union. The Danish prime minister made an announcement praising the progress Turkey had made toward democracy and human rights. But he also said, "Turkey can get a date for the start of accession negotiations if and when Turkey fulfills the political criteria." He suggested a review of Turkey's progress should take place two years later, in December 2004.

Erdoğan was not happy, but he took the decision in stride. "We are not upset," he responded. "But it could have been a better decision. We will do our utmost to start talks in December 2004."

Meanwhile, Tayyip Erdoğan flew home with some of what he wanted. He had American support for Turkey's bid for admittance to the European Union and a stamp of legitimacy from the American government—not only for being recognized as the true leader of Turkey, but also for his new approach to religion and politics. "We have a common tie," Bush told Erdoğan. "You are a man of faith and I am a man of faith. You have no shame about that and I have no shame about that."

What Bush got was Erdoğan's qualified support for an invasion of Iraq by the United States. "Turkey's preference is for war to be the last resort," said Erdoğan. "But if Saddam Hussein's administration continues to protect developments which threaten world peace, then Turkey will give the necessary support." Erdoğan had stopped well short, however, of agreeing to let U.S. troops use Turkey as a staging ground for the invasion of Iraq.

Returning to Turkey, Erdoğan went back to politics. The AKP introduced to the National Assembly an amendment changing the clause in the constitution that barred people convicted of engaging in "ideological and anarchic activities" from serving in parliament. The measure passed the Assembly,



U.S. President George W. Bush speaks to Tayyip Erdoğan, then chairperson of Turkey's ruling AK Party, and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during a meeting at the White House, in December 2002. The United States was courting Erdogan, leader of the newly elected AKP party, to allow the deployment of U.S. troops in Turkey during a war with Iraq.

paving the way for Erdoğan to run in the next election. But the amendment did not go through without some opposition. Turkish president Ahmet Necdet Sezer vetoed the bill, arguing the constitution should not be changed for the benefit of just one person.

The bill was then sent back to the Assembly. The opposition party decided it was useless to deny to Erdoğan what most considered to be his rightful due. The Assembly voted 437 in favor of Erdoğan, and the second time around, the president had no veto power. He signed the bill into law at the end of December 2002.

In the province of Siirt, where Erdoğan's wife, Emine, is from, there had been certain irregularities during the November

election, so the results were cancelled. A new by-election was scheduled. That gave Erdoğan his opening: he announced he would run for parliament from Siirt.

Tayyip Erdoğan continued to meet with foreign leaders, as if he were already the prime minister. He also took the reins to lead Turkey through the minefield of the upcoming Iraq war. He met with Syria's leader, a traditional Turkish enemy and friend to Iraq, to try to improve their relations and strategize for the Iraq war. He made a trip to Russia where he met with President Vladimir Putin. He visited the central Asian countries of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, and made a three-day state visit to China.

As the United States pressed its case against Iraq and began a military buildup in the region, Erdoğan convened a meeting of Middle Eastern countries to look for ways to avoid war. As a member of NATO, and an ally to the United States, Turkey was expected to support U.S. policies against Iraq. But Erdoğan was balking. At a meeting of the World Economic Forum, an annual gathering of world business and political leaders, Erdoğan sided with the Germans and the French, saying that there should be no war unless the UN Security Council decided that inspectors found weapons of mass destruction and then voted to take military action.

Nevertheless, at the forum, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell pressed for access to Turkish air space and sought permission to station up to eighty thousand troops in Turkey. In return, he offered an enhanced financial aid package to help defray the economic costs that war would bring to Turkey.

But Erdoğan remained unimpressed. He said the 1991 Persian Gulf War had cost Turkey some $100 billion in economic hardship due to lost trade, lost oil revenue, and lost tourism. He asked for more money from the United States, in the event of war, still hoping that somehow peace could be preserved.

Back home, a few days later, Erdoğan had a change of heart. He decided that war was inevitable, and he wanted Turkey to

have some influence over events, both during and after the war. He worried about a repeat of the Kurdish situation from 1991 that had thousands of Iraqi Kurds overwhelming Turkish relief efforts. By joining the United States in its effort, he reasoned, Turkey could forestall this potential problem with the Kurds. In the meantime, the United States increased its aid package first to some $14 billion and then again to $26 billion.

In the beginning of February 2003, despite almost unanimous opposition to the war among both voters and members of parliament, Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Abdullah Gül brought a proposal to the National Assembly to allow the United States to upgrade military bases and ports in Turkey. They won the vote, with 308 representatives in support, although several AKP party members defected and voted with the opposition.

Erdoğan also considered allowing a full deployment of U.S. troops in Turkey, but knowing that many members of his own party were against the war, he postponed a vote. He told the United States he wanted to wait for further reports from UN weapons inspectors. He insisted that the United States guarantee there would be no independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq after the war, for fear it would incite his own Kurdish minority to push for independence. He proposed a buffer zone between northern Iraq and the Turkish border, patrolled by Turkish troops.

ON A WAR FOOTING

While events conspired to make Iraq the number one issue in Turkey, the political gears were still in motion. And Tayyip Erdoğan finally got some good news. The Turkish election board approved his bid to run for the National Assembly from Siirt. The election was set for March 9, 2003.

But first there was one more item of business over Iraq. Erdoğan's eagerness not to alienate the United States, Turkey's chief ally in the world, combined with the offer of a hefty

economic package, overcame his reluctance to go to war with a Muslim neighbor. So Erdoğan and Gül together recommended a package that would allow up to sixty-two thousand foreign troops to deploy on Turkish soil.

But Erdoğan was in for a surprise when the AKP turned against him. More than one hundred party members either abstained, or voted against the proposed measure, and by a narrow vote parliament rejected the proposal to cooperate with the United States. It was Gül who came out and confirmed the result. "Turkey is the only democratic country in the region," he said. "The decision is clear. We have to respect this decision, as this is what democracy requires."

Yet what could have been a defeat for Erdoğan was turned into a victory, of sorts. At first he was criticized for not being able to deliver his party members for a vote on a proposal he had championed. But then Erdoğan began to get credit for letting democracy take its course, as Gül suggested. Suddenly, a political leader was letting members of the government think for themselves. "People said they wanted a democracy in Turkey, and now they have one. Turkey is a real democracy," commented one AKP member. Another said, "For 40 years the U.S. got whatever it asked for here. But Tayyip Erdoğan is not that way. He really believes in democracy."

On March 9, the election in Siirt went ahead. Three seats were open. The AKP took all three seats, winning 85 percent of the vote. Tayyip Erdoğan had finally been elected to the National Assembly and as leader of his party he was the natural choice for prime minister.

Two days later Abdullah Gül resigned and Tayyip Erdoğan, at the age of forty-nine, became prime minister of Turkey. Within a few days he had appointed a new cabinet, including Adbullah Gül as foreign minister.

No sooner had he taken office, however, when Erdoğan was forced to make a crucial decision. The United States was exerting increasing pressure to let American troops land in

Turkey. Some U.S. forces had actually disembarked as part of the program approved earlier to refurbish air bases. More American troops were at sea, headed toward Turkey.

Now the Turkish military came out and openly supported the American cause against Iraq. Turkey's military wanted to send the Turkish army into Iraq with the Americans, to take control of the Kurd situation. With no Turkish cooperation, the United States would surely post a keep out sign. "If we don't take part," complained one general, "we will suffer the same damage, but it won't be possible to get compensation for the losses, or have a say afterward."

Yet polls showed that over 90 percent of Turks were against joining with the Americans. Demonstrations were staged as Turkish television showed pictures of American troops and equipment unloading from the Mediterranean then heading inland. These maneuvers were merely part of the earlier agreement to upgrade the bases, came the official explanation. But some Turks began to think that U.S. combat forces were moving into Turkey without permission.

Erdoğan walked a thin line. On one side of that line were his critics in the military, allied with his best friend abroad, the United States; on the other side were members of his own party, as well as the Turkish public, all dead set against war. Erdoğan's answer was a masterful exercise in delay tactics. He talked about submitting a second bill to the National Assembly to permit U.S. troops to land in Turkey. But he said he needed more assurances from the United States about protecting Turkey from Kurds fleeing the war zone. In addition, he still wanted to wait for a UN resolution that would back the U.S. position.

In the end, Erdoğan never had to submit a bill to the Assembly. The United States finally just gave up on Turkey, and began moving troops from the Mediterranean toward the Red Sea to support its invasion from the south. There was only one problem for Turkey—the multibillion-dollar American aid package had suddenly vanished.

Turkish financial markets took a dive, for this and several other reasons—worries over war on Turkey's border, the possibility of an independent Kurd state, and the disintegration of relations with the country's most important ally topped the list. On March 19, 2003, Prime Minister Erdoğan offered a compromise measure. In an attempt to revive the aid package from the United States, Erdoğan asked for and received parliament's permission to open Turkish airspace to American warplanes. But there would be no U.S. ground troops and no U.S. planes launching attacks from Turkish airfields.

The very next day, March 20, the American-led coalition invaded Iraq—with no advance notice to Turkey. Erdoğan was criticized in the American press for lack of cooperation, and for jeopardizing a decades-long relationship with the United States. But Erdoğan got credit at home for standing up to the Americans. Turkish polls showed that some 94 percent of Turks opposed the war in Iraq. Said one AKP leader: "I believe it was more like 99.9 percent. The prime minister did his best. There are some limitations in a democratic process."

Right away, Erdoğan began to repair relations with the United States. He wrote articles published in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, addressed to opinion leaders. He said Turkey wanted peace in the Middle East. He pointed out that Turkish public opinion was overwhelmingly against the war, and that Turkey had suffered enormously from the effects of the first Gulf War. He also wrote that the National Assembly had authorized the Turkish government to deploy military forces in northern Iraq. But, he said, there was no intention of invading Iraq or establishing control over any Turkish portion of the country. His troops would take up positions along the border to control refugees fleeing Iraq and prevent any possible terrorist threat coming from Kurdish extremists. He then made a plea for keeping Iraq together as one country after the war, saying it should not be split up into separate ethnic areas.



Turkish tanks park in a camp near the country's border with Iraq, March 30, 2003. Thousands of Turkish troops amassed near the Iraqi border in southeast Turkey, to stem the possible tide of Kurdish refugees from Iraq into the country as a consequence of the U.S. war in Iraq. After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, more than two million Kurds fled to Turkish and Iranian borders, fearing reprisal after a Kurdish uprising against the Iraqi government was crushed. The sea of refugees caused social upheaval and cost the Turkish government exhorbitant sums of money in relief aid.

The U.S. government, too, made overtures to repair strained relations with Turkey. Secretary of State Colin Powell journeyed to Ankara in April 2003, carrying a "consolation prize," a $1 billion aid package. But with it came warnings to keep Turkish troops out of Iraq, and to cooperate with the United States in its efforts. The United States also pledged to Erdoğan that Turkey could take part in the reconstruction of Iraq—a windfall for Turkish industry.

Only time would tell whether the outcome in Iraq would ever bring any direct benefits to Turkey. In the meantime, Erdoğan started to work on some of his election pledges, and the first item on the list was the economy. He made some unpopular decisions, such as increasing taxes and cutting public spending. But in return, in April 2003, he was able to secure more loans from the international community.

He also began to sell off a number of state-owned businesses including oil refineries, banks, and tobacco companies, hoping to pay off some of Turkey's debt with the proceeds. Once those companies were in private hands, they could be run more efficiently and more profitably, and that would help improve the Turkish economy.

Slowly but surely, the economy started to get better. Jobs were created. The inflation rate came down. Turkish currency was worth more. A new financial aid package came through from the United States.

Erdoğan was just beginning to be successful. But there was much more to do.

CHAPTER

8

Facing the Future

In April 2003, the Turkish parliament was scheduled to hold a reception for the political elite in Ankara. The host, the speaker of the National Assembly, a member of the AKP, said he wanted his wife to be the cohost. His wife, a devout Muslim, wore a headscarf in public. That was enough to scandalize both the opposition party, the Republican People's Party, and the military brass. Offended by what they considered a challenge to their secular tradition, they announced they would all boycott the reception.

Tayyip Erdoğan sought to reassure his opponents. He promised to leave his own wife, Emine, at home. So did other AKP leaders whose wives wore headscarves. The speaker changed his mind and agreed his wife would not attend. But even though the Islamist leaders backed down, the military and the opposition members of parliament, as well as important federal judges, still refused to attend

the party. Such is the symbolic importance that the headscarf still carries in Turkey.

Erdoğan was disappointed, but decided not to make a big issue out of the snub. "If there are sides that want to create tension, we will never respond to them," he said. "We have an understanding of the sensitivities of society . . . we will always pay attention to these sensitivities."

Erdoğan had learned, even before he became prime minister, that the bureaucracy, the military, and the political establishment were all well entrenched in the Turkish corridors of power. He would have to push hard to modernize the government of Turkey and complete the transition to full democracy. But he would also have to be ready to retreat if he pushed too hard. He remembered what happened to his mentor, Necmettin Erbakan, who failed to take such "sensitivities" into consideration. He knew he would have to take two steps forward, and one step back, then two more steps forward, to achieve his goals while overcoming opposition both at home and abroad.

In November 2003 the country took a step backwards when two separate bombings occurred in Istanbul during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. On November 15, suicide bombers blew up pickup trucks outside two synagogues in the city, killing 27 people. Just five days later, a blast went off at a British diplomatic building, and another at an international bank, killing 30 more people and injuring some 450 others. It was later discovered that the bombers were Turks with some vague connection to al Qaeda, apparently protesting Turkey's ties with Israel and Erdoğan's cooperation with the British and American-led war in Iraq.

Erdoğan's response to the attacks was not so moderate. He vowed to track down the conspirators. "Those who bloodied this holy day and massacred innocent people will account for it in both worlds," he said. "They will be damned until eternity." Turkish police later rounded up the perpetrators and brought them to justice.



This shows the aerial view of the destroyed yard of the British consulate in central Istanbul, November 22, 2003. Four suicide bombers killed more than 50 people in Istanbul that week, also targeting two synagogues and an international bank. The group claiming responsibility had loose links to al Qaeda, and with the bombings it protested Turkey's ties with Israel and its cooperation with the British and American-led war in Iraq.

Yet the bombings did not shake Erdoğan's belief in his religion, as he refused to admit that terrorism was inexorably linked to Islam. "Terror has no religion or nationality," he said, insisting that fundamentalist religious groups are different from terrorists. "Are there terrorists among Muslims? Of course there are," he told a group of his own Justice and Development Party members. "There are terrorists hailing from every society. They can come from among Jews, they can come from among Christians. Are we then supposed to start judging those

religions and cast clouds on them?" He added, "Terrorism is damned. Wherever it is, we will stand against it and we will smash its head."

RIGHTS FOR THE KURDS

One area where the violence had decreased, and Erdoğan had made some tentative progress, was in the southeastern section of the country, the place the Kurds call home. Back in 1920, as the Ottoman Empire was collapsing, the Kurds were promised a homeland of their own. But as the European powers divided up the empire, and Atatürk defended his own Turkish turf, the Kurds were left out. They did not get their own country after all. Approximately half of those Kurds were living in Turkey. The rest were spread out over northern Iraq, northern Iran, and eastern Syria.

Atatürk wanted the Kurds to assimilate into Turkey. He banned the Kurdish language and all cultural expressions of Kurdish lifestyle. For many years the Turkish government even refused to call these people Kurds, referring to them instead as "Mountain Turks."

Although Atatürk repressed the Kurds, he failed to erase their ethnic pride. Starting in the 1970s, when the power of Atatürk's legacy began to fade and the Turkish government became divided and confused, the Kurds began their push for political power. These efforts were fiercely resisted by the Turkish military. The result: an estimated thirty thousand Kurds have been killed in their sometimes violent attempts to assert their rights and establish autonomy for their region. The problem only got worse in the late 1980s and early 1990s as Kurds from Iraq fled their own war-torn country and found refuge in the Turkish mountains.

The movement grew into an armed insurgency by an outlawed group called the Kurdistan Workers' Party, led by a man named Abdullah Öcalan. After he was captured, in 1999, the group gave up its fight for an independent homeland and the

Kurds called a truce, hoping for aid from the government. By that time many of the Kurds—following the example of other rural Turks—had fled the mountains and migrated west into Istanbul, Ankara, and other cities in a search of a better life. Those who were left behind suffered poverty and isolation, subsisting on substandard earnings that were less than half those of the average Turk.

Under Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish National Assembly passed an amnesty law aimed at disarming the last remnants of the rebellion. Those Kurds not directly involved in armed attacks were encouraged to surrender, and they would be set free to live their lives in peace. The amnesty, however, was seen as a threat by Turkey's military, which had used the Kurdish rebellion over the years as a reason to build up its armaments, its budgets, and its manpower. The military's suspicion of the new prime minister only grew stronger, but there was not much it could do at this point to stop the march of democracy.

The government's reforms included measures allowing the 14 million Kurds to teach their own language in schools and to broadcast television programs in their own language. Yet the reforms have been slow to take effect. People on all sides of the issue remain wary and suspicious.

During the Iraqi war of 2003–2004 Turkey worried that Iraqi Kurds would gain control over northern sections of their country and establish an independent government, inspiring Turkish Kurds to reignite their own independence drive. The Turkish National Assembly, defying the recommendation of the United States, authorized the military to go into northern Iraq to protect the Turkish border and establish a buffer zone. A small Turkish force took up positions at the border, without making a major incursion into Iraq, to forestall a refugee problem like the one that plagued the country during the first Gulf War.

With the war ostensibly over, some of Turkey's fears have been eased. The Kurdish resistance leader, Abdullah Öcalan, is in prison on an island off Istanbul, in the Marmara Sea.



Kurdish Turks hold posters of imprisoned Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Öcalan. Öcalan helped create the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, to seek Kurdish independence. In 1984, he encouraged the PKK to turn to terrorist activities to achieve its goals. In June 1999, Öcalan was tried and convicted of treason and sentenced to death; his case waits hearing by a European court.

He is no longer considered a threat. But problems remain. By one estimate, some 70 percent of the factories in the Kurdish area are idle, and an estimated 80 percent of the Kurds are unemployed.

The Turks are hoping that the Kurds will be among those who take part in the reconstruction of Iraq. As supplies and equipment are transported through their region, they should benefit from an influx of money and jobs and exposure to the outside world.

But the situation is full of uncertainty, and as long as the political situation in Iraq remains unstable the Turks will be on guard. There is no question that the issue of the Kurds will remain on Tayyip Erdoğan's agenda for the rest of his term in office.

CYPRUS: THE SAGA CONTINUES

The island of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean only some fifty miles off the Turkish coast, has been divided since 1974. Turkish forces under Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and coalition partner Necmettin Erbakan invaded the country and took over more than one third of the island on behalf of Turkish Cypriots. The invasion was in response to a pro-Greek coup that favored merging the island with Greece. In 1983, the occupied section of the island became the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a country recognized by no one except Turkey. Turkish troops, numbering some thirty thousand, have remained on the island ever since along with a smaller contingent of NATO peacekeeping troops.

For three decades the people of Cyprus were held hostage to the political impasse that cut their island in two. No one was motivated to find a way to solve the problem and unite both sides. Meanwhile, families were separated. Mainland Greece and Turkey were on opposites sides of the Cyprus fence. The whole situation festered as a thorn in the side of Turkey's relationship with the rest of Europe.

But Tayyip Erdoğan wanted to join the European Union. And the ministers in Europe had made it very clear that resolving the issue in Cyprus would boost Turkey's chances for membership. Adding to the pressure was the fact that in 2003 Cyprus was slated as one of ten countries approved for membership in the European Union, along with post-Cold War Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Membership would become effective as of May 1, 2004. If Cyprus was unified, the whole country would

join. If Cyprus was still split in half, then only the Greek-administered side would become a member, and Turkish Cypriots would be left behind.

Erdoğan outlined the AKP position on Cyprus early in his administration. He supported a proposal by the United Nations that envisioned two "constituent" states under a central government. The Turkish side, with a quarter of the population but almost 40 percent of the land, would be required to give back to the Greeks some, but not all, of the area seized in the 1974 war.

The proposal sounded reasonable, but like everything else in Turkey the reality was much more complicated. The long-time Turkish Cypriot leader did not support reunification of Cyprus, fearing he would lose power. And the Turkish military, once again suspicious of Erdoğan, supported the Cypriot leader.

However, the economics of the situation supported reunification. Since 1983 the international community has boycotted the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. As a result, Turkish Cypriots have relied heavily on aid from Turkey—an increasingly heavy burden as Turkey waded through its recession. Even so, Turkish Cypriots suffered a standard of living far below people on the mainland of Turkey, and far below people on the other side of their own island.

Increasingly dissatisfied with their isolation and poverty, many Turkish Cypriots favored reunification. In January 2003, some thirty thousand Turks on the island protested against the lack of progress toward a resolution of the problem. Finally in May 2003, bowing to pressure, the Cypriots opened the gates in the wall that separated the two sides. For the first time in thirty years, people were allowed to cross over and visit old friends, old neighborhoods, and nearby places that had never been seen.

Prime Minister Erdoğan made a trip to the island to encourage cooperation. He also met with the prime minister of Greece, to persuade him to talk some sense into the Greek



Tayyip Erdoğan, as leader of the the newly victorious AK Party, meets with Greek Premier Costas Simitis on November 18, 2002, in Athens, Greece. Erdoğan sought Greek support for the admission of Turkey into the European Union. The two leaders also discussed the issue of a divided Cyprus, a stumbling block in Turkey's EU application.

Cypriot government. He met with UN leaders and European leaders to rally their support for the plan to merge the two sides of Cyprus.

In December 2003 the Turks on Cyprus held an election, and split between pro-unification and anti-unification forces. Erdoğan stepped in and prevailed upon the Turks to work together and resume talks over reuniting the island. If the Turks and the Greeks could not reach an agreement themselves, the United Nations would finalize a treaty and put it to a vote on each side of the island.

Despite continuing talks, the two sides could not agree. So, on April 24, 2004, both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots went to the polls to vote on the UN resolution. Secretary Kofi Annan of the United Nations appealed to Cypriots to "seize this chance for peace" and join the European Union together as a unified country along with the other nine new members of the organization. He pledged that the United Nations would strengthen its presence on the island and provide both financial and political support.

The Turks, under international pressure, especially from Tayyip Erdoğan, voted in favor of the UN agreement. But the Greeks voted against. So reunification was not to be—at least not yet.

Two weeks later, Tayyip Erdoğan traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to attend the accession ceremony of the ten new members to the European Union, including the Greek-administered side of Cyprus. Clearly, his job was not yet done. But there was no lack of energy to continue. He was soon on his way to Greece. He met with the premier and, despite the failure of the peace initiative on Cyprus, received the Greek premier's pledge to support Turkey's bid to join the European Union.

A TICKET TO EUROPE

At first, in November 2002, the election of a pro-Islamist party in Turkey had been viewed as a setback to the country's quest for membership in the European Union. Bülent Ecevit's government had just passed a package of reforms the previous summer designed to make Turkey more democratic and allay European concerns over human rights in the country. The Turks broadened the scope of free speech, abolished the death penalty, lifted restrictions on the press, and eased up heavy sanctions on the separatist Kurds.

The election of a political party with Islamic roots made the Europeans even more reluctant to accept this Muslim country with a spotty human rights record and a strong military that

did not hesitate to get involved in government affairs. As everyone knew, the Islamists had a tradition of turning their backs on Europe to embrace their neighbors in the Middle East. So why would they suddenly want to join Europe?

Indeed, there were questions in Turkey, and especially among Islamists, over Europe's attitude toward its southern neighbor. While Turkey had been knocking in vain on Europe's door for decades, it seemed the new countries of Eastern Europe got a first-class ticket to the European Union party. Many Turks felt snubbed. If Europe didn't want them, they argued, then why should they want Europe?

But Tayyip Erdoğan quickly made it clear he was strongly in favor of membership in the European Union. It would help bring economic prosperity to the country that had been suffering from recession. It would bring more security to this country on the front lines of the Middle East. And European concerns over military intervention in politics would give him some insurance against his own Turkish military.

So Erdoğan applied pressure to convince European leaders that Turkey was a good bet for inclusion in their club. Indeed, some of those European leaders needed convincing, for if the Turks were ambivalent about joining forces with Europe, there were plenty of Europeans who resisted the prospect of Turkey joining the European Union. Turkey was too big, they argued, it would overwhelm the smaller countries of Europe. There were already millions of Turks in Europe, drawn by employment opportunities there. Did Europe really want more Turks who would arrive with an EU membership card? Turkey is not even European, many said, and it is a Muslim country with an Islamic culture, not the Judeo-Christian background of Europe.

But Erdoğan was determined. Even before he became prime minister he was touring Europe, pushing for Turkey's acceptance into the European Union. Yes, he said, the Turkish military is strong, but it has been a source of protection for

NATO for half a century. Yes, most of Turkey lies in Asia, but Istanbul is a historic European city—and most of Turkey lies west of Cyprus, already slated for membership in the European Union. And while Turkey has had its human-rights problems in the past, the country is moving toward greater democratic guarantees and more economic opportunities. Of course, Turkey is not wealthy like France or Germany, but it is richer than many of the Eastern European countries accepted for membership—and Turkey's size and potential would offer many economic opportunities that could eventually provide enormous benefits to the European community.

The European Union was scheduled to meet in December 2003, and agreed to take up the question of whether Turkey was ready to begin an official application procedure. Erdoğan once again toured Europe to solicit support. But when the vote was taken, Turkey was yet again put off. There were still too many questions about human rights and the economy and how Turkey would fit into Europe. Besides, the European Union was already involved in assimilating ten new members. It just was not ready to take another country, especially one that was the size of the other ten put together.

The Turks were disappointed, but Erdoğan pressed on toward the next opportunity, in December 2004. He went back to Turkey to submit more reforms, charge up the economy, and shape his vision for his country's future. "We continue to work for accession talks with as much goodwill as we can," he said. "As much as we would like to be a part of the European Union family, the EU should want Turkey to be part of it." He went on: "If the European Union wants to be an address where civilizations meet, it must take Turkey in. Whether we get a date for accession negotiations at the December summit or not, we will continue to implement these reforms for the benefit of our own people."

Tayyip Erdoğan sees himself as a force throughout the Middle East and Central Asia for bringing nations together and

helping them work toward a more modern, more democratic future. He has cemented ties with the United States, courted European favor, and also become a leader in the moderate Muslim world. He has hosted heads of state from Pakistan, Iran, and Syria on visits to Turkey. He has visited Russia, China, and the new countries of Central Asia. He has offered to sponsor peace talks between the Arabs and the Israelis.

During the decades of the Cold War, as the only Muslim country that was a member of NATO, Turkey protected the Western world's southern flank from Soviet expansion. Today, Turkey sets an example as a moderate Muslim country that embraces democracy and lives peacefully and harmoniously within a community of nations. Erdoğan envisions Turkey as a Western democratic country, and an Islamic one as well. Like a Christian Democrat in Europe, he is an Islamist Democrat in the Middle East—a politician with a religious tradition who operates in a secular democratic system.

"We see the European Union as an address where civilizations unite and harmonize," he says. "Turkey is a model country which has merged the culture of Islam and democracy together."

By all accounts his vision is coming into focus. In the March 2004 municipal elections, Erdoğan was able to campaign for AKP candidates and point to a better economy, closer relations with the West, a valiant attempt to solve the Cyprus situation, and an improving situation with the Kurds. The election affirmed his message, as the AKP won 40 percent of the vote, up from 34 percent in 2002.

Turkey was giving Erdoğan a mandate to continue his pursuit of an Islamic democracy. Surely, the path toward the future would not always be smooth. But no matter what happens, Turkey's great experiment in democracy would live on.

CHRONOLOGY

1500 B.C.	Hittites develop civilization in Anatolia and rival Egypt as world power.
200 B.C.	Alexander the Great conquers Asia Minor for the Greeks.
C. 100 B.C.–400 AD	Roman Empire rules the Middle East.
C. 330	Emperor Constantine moves to Byzantium, renames city and establishes Christian empire which flourishes for a thousand years.
C. 570–632	Muhammad establishes the Islam religion in Arabia.
1100s	Seljuks arrive in Anatolia.
1453	Mehmet II conquers Constantinople and renames the city Istanbul, which becomes capital of the Ottoman Empire.
1520–1566	Rule of Süleyman the Magnificent marks height of Ottoman Empire.
1914–1919	World War I brings collapse of Ottoman Empire, and makes Mustafa Kemal a hero at Gallipoli.
1923	Mustafa Kemal (now known as Atatürk) founds the Republic of Turkey.
1938	Atatürk dies; Ismet Inönü is elected president.
1950	First opposition party leaders are elected; Cemal Bayer as president, Adnan Menderes as prime minister.
1954	**February 26** Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is born in Istanbul.
1960	First military coup occurs in Turkey.
1961	**September 17** Former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes is executed.
1970	Tayyip Erdoğan, at age sixteen, joins the youth branch of Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist Party.
1971	Second military coup occurs in Turkey.
1974	**July** Turkey invades Cyprus.
1976	Tayyip Erdoğan is elected chairman of Islamist party youth organization in Beyoglu, then moves up to party leader for city of Istanbul.
1980	Third military coup occurs in Turkey.
1981	Tayyip Erdoğan graduates from Marmara University.
1983	Turgut Özal is elected prime minister, ushering in stable government and good economic times.

CHRONOLOGY

1984	Erdoğan is named chairman of the Welfare Party office in Beyoglu.
1985	Erdoğan is named chairman of the Istanbul Welfare Party and appointed member of party's executive board.
1989–1991	Collapse of Soviet Union brings formation of three new countries on Turkey's eastern border: Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.
1991	Persian Gulf War brings boycott against Iraq and hard economic times in Turkey.
1993	Turgut Özal dies. Süyelman Demeril becomes president; Tansu Çiller is elected as the first woman prime minister.
1994	**March** Tayyip Erdoğan is elected mayor of Istanbul as Welfare Party makes strong showing in local elections.
1995	**December** Welfare Party wins national election.
1996	**July** Necmettin Erkaban becomes first pro-Islamic prime minister of Turkey.
1997	**June** Necmettin Erkaban is forced to resign.
1998	**January** The Welfare Party is banned.
1998	**April** Tayyip Erdoğan is convicted of inciting hatred and sentenced to prison.
1999	The Virtue Party is founded, then banned; Erdoğan spends four months in prison.
2001	**September** Erdoğan forms the Justice and Development Party (AKP).
2002	**November 3** The AKP wins the national election.
2002	**December** Erdoğan, as head of the AKP, travels to Europe and United States.
2003	**March 9** Tayyip Erdoğan is elected to the National Assembly.
2003	**March 11** Tayyip Erdoğan becomes prime minister.
2003	**March 20** U.S.-led coalition forces invade Iraq.
2003	**December** European Union turns down Turkey's bid for membership.
2004	**May** Turkish Cypriots vote in favor of UN peace agreement, but Greek Cypriots vote against; AKP wins local elections in Turkey.
2004	**December** European Union votes once again on Turkish membership.

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Abdül Hamid II, 34
Abraham, 23
Adam, 23
Aegean Sea, 17, 18, 20–21, 27
Africa, and Ottoman Empire, 32
al Qaeda, and bombings in Istanbul, 113
Alexander the Great, 27
alphabet, and Atatürk, 42
Anatolia, 22–23, 25
  and ancient history, 27–29
  and Byzantine Empire, 18, 28–30
  and Seljuks, 29–30. *See also* Ottoman Empire
Anatolian Plateau, 16, 17, 22–23
Ankara
  as capital, 22, 39
  and Welfare Party, 16, 67
Annan, Kofi, 121
Arabian Peninsula, and Islam, 29
Ararat, Mount, 22–23
Armenia/Armenians, 22, 33, 35, 37, 62
Asia, 20
  Seljuks from, 29–30
  Turks from, 17
Asia Minor, 22. *See also* Anatolian Plateau
Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal ("Father of the Turks"), 27, 34, 35–39, 40–42, 58, 65, 72, 78, 81, 88, 115
Atatürk Dam, 23
Atlantic Ocean, 17
Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Ottoman Empire, 32, 33
Azerbaijan, 22, 105

Baghdad, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Balkans, and Ottoman Empire, 30, 32–33, 34
Bayer, Celal, 43, 44–46, 78
BBC, and television show in Turkey, 12–14
Bey, Togrel, 29
Beyoglu, 19, 20
  and Erdoğan as chairman of Welfare Party in, 58
  and Erdoğan chairman of Islamist Party's youth branch in, 56
  Erdoğan's early years in, 25, 26, 73. *See also* Istanbul
bin Laden, Osama, 88
Black Sea, 17, 18, 25, 31
Bosphorus Strait, 18, 19, 20, 25, 35
Bulgarians, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Bursa, 20
Bush, George W., 88, 92, 101–103
Byzantine Empire, 18, 28–32
Byzantium, 18, 28. *See also* Istanbul

Cairo, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Cakir, Rusen, 85
Cardin, Pierre, 14
Cheney, Dick, 101
China, and Iraq war, 105
Christians
  and Constantinople, 18, 28–29
  and Middle Ages, 17, 25
  and Ottoman Empire, 18, 30, 31–32
  and Seljuks, 29, 30
Çiller, Tansu, 15, 65–67, 68–72, 97
climate, 22, 25
Cold War, 124
Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), 34
communism, and Erbakan, 48
Constantine, 18, 28
Constantine XI, 32
Constantinople, 18, 28–29, 30–32. *See also* Istanbul
constitution
  1876, 34
  1924, 41, 47
  1961, 47
  1982, 60
corruption, and Erdoğan, 98
Crusaders, 30

Cyprus, 21
as British colony, 50
and Ecevit, 50
and Erbakan, 50
and Erdoğan, 97, 98, 102, 118–121, 124
Greeks and ethnic Turks in, 50
and independence, 50
and United States, 102

Damascus, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Dardanelles, 18, 20, 25, 30, 35
Demirel, Süleyman, and Welfare Party, 78
and Justice Party, 47–49, 52–53, 59, 60
and True Path Party, 60, 63–64, 65, 71
democracy
and Atatürk, 40–42, 53
and Ecevit, 121
and Erdoğan, 87, 107, 124
Democrat Party, 43–45
Bayer and Menderes forming, 43
and Menderes, 43–46
as outlawed, 46
Dervis, Kemal, 89, 93, 94

earthquakes, 21
Eastern Europe, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Ecevit, Bülent
and Cyprus, 50, 118
and democracy, 121
and economy, 52, 85, 89
Erdoğan *versus,* 87, 90, 93, 95
and European Union, 85, 89, 121
and human rights, 89, 121
and Islam, 52
in jail, 53
and Kurds, 89, 121
and oil, 52
and Republican People's Party, 47–48, 49–50, 52, 53
and retirement, 96–97
and secularism, 48
and Soviet Union, 48
and Welfare Party, 78
economy
and Çiller, 67, 69–70
and Demirel, 52, 64
and Ecevit, 52, 85, 89
and Erbakan, 78
and Erdoğan, 87, 92, 93, 97, 98, 100, 101–102, 105, 106, 108–109, 110, 111, 123
and Iraq war, 101–102, 105, 106–107, 108–109, 110
and Menderes, 45
and 1970s, 55
and Özal, 61–62, 65
and Persian Gulf War, 101, 105, 109
Egypt, and Ottoman Empire, 32, 35
elections, and Atatürk, 40–41
Eraslan, Sibel, 75
Erbakan, Necmettin
and communism, 48
and Cyprus, 50, 118
and economy, 78
and Erdoğan, 14, 75, 85, 113
and Happiness Party, 87, 94
as ineligible to run for Parliament, 92
and Iran, 78
and Islam, 48, 77–80
and Islamist Party, 14, 48–49, 50, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62
in jail, 14, 53
and Libya, 78
and Özal, 59–64
and secularism, 79–80
and United Nations, 48
and Welfare Party, 14, 57, 58, 59, 60–61, 62, 67, 71, 72, 73, 75, 77–80, 83
and West, 48
and women, 77
Erdoğan, Ahmet (father), 25, 26, 73

Erdoğan, Ermine (wife)
and children, 57, 98–99
and headscarf, 15, 73, 98, 112
in Idealist Ladies Association, 57
and marriage to Erdoğan, 57
in Welfare Party, 57–58
and women in politics, 58
Erdoğan, Necmettin (son), 57
Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip
as acting head of state, 101–107
and amnesty, 87
birth of, 25
childhood of, 25, 26, 55, 73
and children, 57, 98–99
and conviction and imprisonment for inciting hatred, 80–81, 84, 85, 88–89, 91
and corruption, 98
and Cyprus, 21, 97, 98, 102, 118–121, 124
and democracy, 107, 124
and early interest in politics, 46, 56–57
and economy, 92, 93, 97, 98, 100, 101–102, 105, 106, 108–109, 110, 111, 123
education of, 54–55, 57
and Erbakan, 14, 75, 85, 113
in Europe, 97, 100
and European Union, 87, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 118, 121–124
and facial hair incident, 57–58
family of, 25, 26, 73
and human rights, 92, 95, 98, 103, 123
as ineligible to become prime minister, 88–89, 90, 92–93, 103–104
and Iraq, 92, 98
and Islam, 14, 16, 25, 54, 57–58, 59, 76, 77, 83–84, 85, 88, 90–91, 93, 114–115
in Islamist Party, 56–57
and Justice and Development Party, 87–88, 89–95, 96
and Kurds, 101, 106, 108, 109, 115–118, 124
and marriage. *See* Erdoğan, Ermine
as mayor of Istanbul, 14–16, 25, 67, 72–73, 75–77, 81, 82, 84, 90, 91
and Menderes, 46
as moderate, 87–88, 90
in National Assembly, 104–105, 106–107
as prime minister, 107–111, 112–114
and soccer, 55–56
and terrorism, 113–115
as transit authority employee, 57–58
and 2002 election, 89–95
and United States, 87–88, 92, 98, 101–103, 105–109, 118, 121, 124
in United States, 101–103
and United States invasion of Iraq, 92, 98, 101–103, 105–111, 116
and Virtue Party, 83–84
and Welfare Party, 14–15, 58
and women, 14, 15, 58, 73, 75, 84, 98, 98–100, 112, 112–113
Euphrates River, 23
European Union
and Bush, 101
and Çiller, 70
and Ecevit, 85, 89, 121
and Erdoğan, 77, 87, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 100, 101, 103, 118, 121, 121–124
and Özal, 61–62, 70
Eve, 23
Evren, Kenan, 53, 60, 64

February 28th Process, 79–81, 83
Fertile Crescent, 23
France
and division of Ottoman Empire, 36, 37
and Iraq war, 105
and World War I, 34

Gallipoli, 30, 35
Garden of Eden, 23
Georgia, 22
Germany
  and Iraq war, 105
  and World War I, 34
  and World War II, 43
Gokalp, Zyia, 80–81
Golden Horn, 20
Grand Bazaar, 20
Great Britain
  and Cyprus, 50
  and division of Ottoman Empire, 37
  and television show in Turkey, 12–14
  and World War I, 34, 35, 36
Greece
  ancient, 20, 27–29
  and conflict with Turkey. *See* Cyprus
  and geography, 17
  and Greeks in Istanbul, 33
  and Greeks under Atatürk, 39
  and Ottoman Empire, 33, 36, 37, 39
  and Trojan wars, 20
Gül, Abdullah, 88, 91, 98, 106, 107
Gürsel, Cemal, 46–47

Hagia Sophia. *See* Saint Sophia
Happiness Party, 87, 91, 94
Hattusa, 27
Helen, 20
Hittites, 27
Homer, 20
human rights
  and Ecevit, 89, 121
  and Erdoğan, 92, 95, 98, 100, 103, 123
  and February 28th Process, 79–81, 83
  and Gürsel, 46
  and Inönü, 43
  and Menderes, 45
Hussein, Saddam, 64, 92, 98, 103

Idealist Ladies Association, 57
Iliad (Homer), 20
Inönü, Ismet (Ismet Pasha)
  and coalition government, 47
  and human rights, 43
  and Menderes, 45
  and Ottoman Empire, 43
  as president, 42–43
  as prime minister, 39
  and Republican People's Party (CHP), 42–43, 45, 47
  and United States, 47
  and victory over Greeks, 37
  and Welfare Party, 78
Inönü (town), 37, 38
Iran
  and Erbakan, 78
  and geography, 23
  and Islam, 77
  and Jerusalem Day in Sincan, 78–79, 80
  and Kurds, 15, 115
  as Persia, 27
  and war with Iraq, 61
Iraq
  and Atatürk Dam, 23
  and Erdoğan on United States invasion of, 92, 98, 101–103, 105–111, 116
  and geography, 23
  and Hussein, 64, 92, 103
  and Kurds, 15, 115
  and Ottomon Empire, 35
  and Persian Gulf War, 64–65
  and Seljuks, 29, 30
  and war with Iran, 61
Islam, 29
  and Atatürk, 40–41, 42
  and Balkans, 32–33
  and BBC television show, 12–14
  and Demirel, 47
  and Democrat Party, 43
  and Ecevit, 52
  and Erbakan, 48, 53, 77–80
  and Erdoğan, 14, 16, 25, 54, 58, 59, 76, 77, 83–84, 85, 88, 90–91, 93
  and Iran, 77

and Koran, 42
and Menderes, 45, 62
and modernization. *See* West
and Özal, 59, 62
and Rize, 25
secularists *versus,* 55
and Seljuks, 29
and *Seriat* law, 48, 53, 71, 77, 78, 79, 90
and television, 12–14
and Turks, 17.
See also Islamist Party; Welfare Party; women
Islamist Party
coup abolishing, 57
and Erbakan, 48–49, 50, 52, 53, 56
and Erdoğan as chairman of youth branch in Beyoglu, 56
and Erdoğan as party leader for Istanbul, 56–57
Ismet Pasha. *See* Inönü, Ismet
Israel, and Welfare Party, 78–79
Istanbul, 18–20
and ancient history, 18, 27
Armenians in, 33
bombings in, 113–115
and Byzantine Empire, 18, 28–29, 30–32
as Byzantium, 18, 28
and capital moved to Ankara, 39
and Christians, 18, 28–29
as Constantinople, 18, 28–29, 30–32
and districts, 19–20
and Erdoğan as chairman of Islamist Party's youth branch in, 56–57
and Erdoğan as chairman of Welfare Party in, 58
and Erdoğan as mayor, 14–16, 25, 67, 72–73, 75–77, 81, 82, 84, 90, 91
Erdoğan attending school in, 54–55, 57
and Erdoğan working for transit authority, 57–58
Erdoğan's early years in, 73
and geography, 17
Greeks in, 33
Jews in, 33
and named "Istanbul," 18–19
and Ottoman Empire, 18, 18–19, 30–32, 33, 76
and Roman Empire, 18, 28–29
and Seljuks, 30
and West, 12, 14
and World War I, 35, 36.
See also Beyoglu
Italy, and division of Ottoman Empire, 36
Izmir, 21

jail
Demirel in, 53
Ecevil in, 53
Erbakan in, 14, 53
Erdoğan in, 80–81, 84, 85, 88–89, 91
Jerusalem, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Jerusalem Day, in Sincan, 78–79, 80
Jews, in Istanbul, 33
Job, 23
Justice and Development Party (AKP)
and Cyprus, 119
and Erdoğan as head, 87–88, 89–95, 96, 96–111, 113–114
Erdoğan forming, 87
and Erdoğan stepping down as head, 88
goals of, 87–88, 90, 96
and Iraq war, 106, 107
and Ramadan, 96
and 2002 election, 89–95
and 2004 election, 124
and women, 97, 112
Justice Party
and Demirel, 47–49, 52–53, 59, 60
formation of, 47
Justinian, 28

Kasimpasa, Erdoğan's early years in, 25, 26
Kazakhstan, and Iraq war, 105
Kemal, Mustafa. *See* Atatürk
Kennedy, John F., 47
Konya, 53
Koran, 42
Kurdistan Workers' Party, 115
Kurds, 23, 55, 62, 80
  and Atatürk, 39, 115
  and Çiller, 66–67, 70–71
  and Demirel, 53
  and Ecevit, 89, 121
  and Erdoğan, 100, 106, 108, 109, 115–118, 124
  and independence, 23
  and Iraq war, 101, 106, 108, 109, 116
  and 1994 election, 15
  and Ottoman Empire, 34, 36, 37, 115
  and Özal, 64–65
  and Persian Gulf War, 64–65

Lausanne, Treaty of, 37–38
Libya, and Erbakan, 78
literacy, and Atatürk, 42

Marmara, Sea of, 17–18, 20, 35, 36, 46, 116
Marmara University (Istanbul), Erdoğan attending, 55, 57
Mecca, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Mediterranean Sea, 17, 21
Mehmet II, 31–32, 76
Menderes, Adnan, 43–46, 47, 78
Middle Ages, 17, 32
Middle East, and Ottoman Empire, 32
modernization. *See* West
Mongols, 17
Motherland Party, 15
  and Özal, 60–65, 68, 70, 71, 75
  and Yilmaz, 71–72, 80, 82, 97
Muhammad, 29
music, and Atatürk, 42

National Assembly, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48, 52, 53, 59–60, 60, 64, 67, 70–71, 72, 85, 88–89, 95, 106, 108, 109, 116
nationalism, and Six Arrows of Kemalism, 41
New York Times, The, 46
Nicholas, Tsar, 33
Noah's Ark, 22–23
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 14, 45, 48, 52, 77, 105, 118, 123, 124

Öcalan, Abdullah, 115, 116–117
Odyssey (Homer), 20
oil
  and Demirel, 64
  and Ecevit, 52
  and 1970s, 55
  and Özal, 61, 64
  and Persian Gulf War, 64, 69
Orhan, 30
Orient Express, 20
Osman, 30
Osmanli dynasty, 30. *See also* Ottoman Empire
Ottoman Empire, 16, 29–33
  and Armenians, 35
  and Christians, 18, 30, 31–32
  collapse of, 27, 33–38, 115
  and Constantinople, 18–19, 30–32, 76
  division of after World War I, 36, 37
  expansion of, 30–33
  and Greece, 33, 36, 37, 39
  and Inönü, 43
  and Mehmet II, 31–32, 76
  Osman creating, 30
  and Süleyman the Magnificent, 32
  and World War I, 34–36
Özal, Turgut, 59–66, 68, 71, 75, 78

Palestine, and Ottoman Empire, 35
Palestinians, and Welfare Party, 78–79

Pasha, Enver, 34
Persia, 27.
See also Iran
Persian Gulf War, 64–65, 67, 69, 101, 105, 109
Poland, and Ottoman Empire, 33
political parties
and coups, 53, 57, 60
and first opposition party, 43
See also Democrat Party; Happiness Party; Islamist Party; Justice and Development Party; Justice Party; Motherland Party; Republican People's Party; True Path Party; Virtue Party; Welfare Party
Polo, Marco, 21
Pontus Mountains, 25
populism, and Six Arrows of Kemalism, 41
Portugal, and Ottoman Empire, 33
Powell, Colin, 105, 110
Prayer Leaders and Preachers School (Istanbul), Erdoğan attending, 54–55
Putin, Vladimir, 105

Qaddafi, Muammar, 78

Ramadan, 76, 96
reformism, and Six Arrows of Kemalism, 41
religion. *See* Christianity; Islam
Renaissance, 33
Republic of Cyprus, 50.
See also Cyprus
Republican People's Party (CHP)
and Atatürk, 41–42, 58
Democrat Party ending one-party rule by, 43
and Dervis, 93, 94
and Ecevit, 47–48, 49–50, 52, 53
and Inönü, 42–43, 45, 47
and 1961 election, 47
and women, 112
republicanism, and Six Arrows of Kemalism, 41
Rice, Condoleeza, 101
Rize, 25
Erdoğan's family from, 25
Roman Empire, 18, 28, 28–29
Russia, 17
and Armenians, 35
and Iraq war, 105
and Ottoman Empire, 33
and World War I, 34–35

Saint Sophia (Hagia Sophia), 18, 20, 28, 32
secularism, 55, 78
and Ecevit, 48
and Erbakan, 79–80
and Six Arrows of Kemalism, 42
Selim I, 32
Seljuks, 29–30.
See also Ottoman Empire
September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and Erdoğan, 87–88
Serbs, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Seriat law, 48, 53, 71, 78, 79, 90
Sezer, Ahmet Necdet, 98, 104
"sick man of Europe," Ottoman Empire as, 33
Siirt, Erdoğan running for National Assembly from, 104–105, 106–107
Silk Road, 25
Sincan, and Jerusalem Day, 78–79, 80
Six Arrows of Kemalism, 41–42, 43
Smyrna, 21, 36, 37.
See also Izmir
socialism, and Özal, 62
South East Anatolia Project, 23
Soviet Union
collapse of, 22
and Ecevit, 48
Spain, and Ottoman Empire, 33
Sparta, 20
Spice Market, 20

Stamboul, 19–20
statism, and Six Arrows of Kemalism, 42
Süleyman the Magnificent, 32
Sumerians, 23
surname, and Atatürk, 42
Syria, 21
  and Armenians, 35
  and Atatürk Dam, 23
  and Iraq war, 105
  and Kurds, 115
  and Ottoman Empire, 35
  and Seljuks, 30

Taliban, and Erdoğan, 87–88
Taurus Mountains, 22
Technical University (Istanbul), Özal attending, 59
television, modernization of, 12–14
terrorism, and Erdoğan, 113–115
Thatcher, Margaret, 65–66
Thrace, 17, 20
  and Ottoman Empire, 30, 34
Tigris River, 23
Topkapi palace, 18, 20
Trabzon, 25, 31
Trojan horse, 20
Trojan wars, 20
Troy, 20
True Path Party
  and Çiller, 65–67, 68–72, 97
  and Demirel, 60, 63–64, 71
  and 1994 election, 15
Tunis, and Ottoman Empire, 32
Turkey
  and ancient history, 18–19, 22–23, 25, 27–30
  and Atatürk, 27, 34, 35–39, 40–42, 58, 65, 72, 78, 81, 88, 115
  and Bayer, 43, 44–46, 78
  and Çiller, 15, 65–67, 68–72, 97
  and cities, 18–20, 21. *See also* Ankara; Istanbul
  and coups, 34, 46–47, 49, 53, 57, 60, 78
  and Demeril, 47–49, 52–53, 59, 60, 63–64, 65, 78
  and Ecevit, 47–48, 49–50, 52, 53, 59, 78, 85, 87, 89, 90, 93, 95, 97, 118, 121
  and Erbakan, 48–49, 50, 52, 53, 59, 60, 61, 62, 67, 71, 72, 73, 75, 77–80, 83, 87, 92, 94, 113, 118
  and Evren, 53, 60, 64
  and geography, 17–18, 20–23, 25
  and Gül, 106, 107
  and Gürsel, 46–47
  and Inönü, 37, 39, 42–43, 45, 47, 78
  and Menderes, 43–46, 62, 78
  and Özal, 59–65, 68, 70, 71, 75, 78
  and people, 17
  and religion. *See* Islam
  as Republic, 18, 27, 36–39
  and Seljuks, 29–30. *See also* Ottoman Empire
  and Sezer, 104
  and Yilmaz, 72, 80, 82, 84–85, 97. *See also* Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip; Istanbul; Ottoman Empire
"Turkey for the Turks," 39
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, 50, 118, 119. *See also* Cyprus
Turkish Riviera, 21, 101
Turkish War of Independence, 21
Turkmenistan, 105

United Nations
  and Cyprus, 50, 102, 119, 120–121
  and embargo on trade with Iraq, 64
  and Erbakan, 48
  and Erdoğan, 77
  and Iraq war, 105
  Turkey in, 43
United States
  and Bush, 88, 92, 101–103
  and Demirel, 52–53
  and Erdoğan, 77, 87–88, 92, 98

and Erdoğan in, 101–103
and Erdoğan's arrest, 81
and Inönü, 47
and Iraq war, 92, 98, 101–103, 105–111, 116
and Menderes, 45
and Persian Gulf War, 64, 65
and Welfare Party, 78–79
Urfa, 23
Uskudar, 19, 20

Vienna, and Ottoman Empire, 32
violence, and Turkey, 46, 48, 49, 52–53, 62, 67, 71, 113–115
Virtue Party
as banned, 87
and Erdoğan, 83–84

Wall Street Journal, The, 109
Washington Post, The, 109
Welfare Party
as banned, 80, 82–83, 87
and Çiller, 72
and Erbakan, 14, 57, 58, 59, 60–61, 62, 67, 71, 73, 75, 77–80, 83
and Erdoğan as chairman in Beyoglu, 58
and Erdoğan as mayor of Istanbul, 14–16, 25, 67, 72–73, 75–77, 81, 82, 84, 90, 91
and Erdoğan chairman in Istanbul, 14, 58
and Erdoğan on executive board, 58
Erdoğan's wife in, 57–58
and European Union, 70
and Islam, 14–15, 16, 59, 77–81
and Jerusalem Day in Sincan, 78–79, 80
and Kurds, 15
and 1994 election, 15–16
and 1995 election, 71–72
strength of, 58–59, 67, 72–73
and Virtue Party, 83
and West, 14
and women, 14–15, 73, 75, 83
West, 16, 17
and Atatürk, 40–42
and Erbakan, 48
and Erdoğan, 14, 77, 92
and Menderes, 45
and Rize, 25
and Saint Sophia, 18
and television, 12–14
and Welfare Party, 14
and Yilmaz, 84–85.
See also Christians; modernization; secularism
women
and Atatürk, 40–41, 42, 65
and Çiller, 15, 65–67, 68–72
and Erbakan, 77
and Erdoğan, 14, 15, 58, 73, 75, 84, 98, 98–100, 112, 112–113
and headscarves, 15, 40–41, 73, 75, 83, 98–100, 112–113
and Justice and Development Party, 97
and Özal, 75
and Virtue Party, 84
and Welfare Party, 14–15, 73, 75, 83
and Yilmaz, 84–85
World Economic Forum, 105
World War I, 34–36
World War II, 43

Yilmaz, Mesut, 64, 71–72, 80, 84–85, 97
Young Turks, 34

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